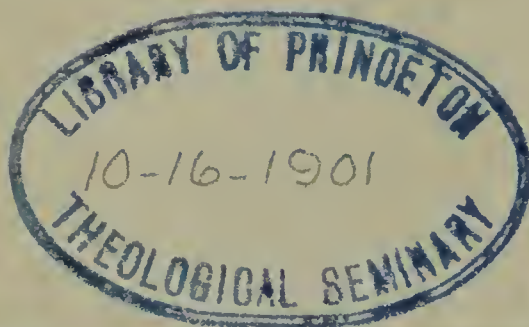


BX  
9184  
.A4  
S7  
v.1



~~BX 9184 .A4 S7 v.1~~

Salmond, S. D. F. 1838-1905.

An exposition of the Shorter  
catechism

SCB

#16,053

v.1









Bible Class Papers

FOR THE YEAR 1880

BY EXERCISES

SHORTER CATECHISM.



“A most useful series of Handbooks. With such helps as these, to be an inefficient teacher is to be blameworthy.”—Rev. C. H. SPURGEON.

## Bible Class Primers.

EDITED BY REV. PROFESSOR SALMOND, D.D.

*In paper covers, 6d. each ; free by post, 7d. In cloth, 8d. each ; free by post, 9d.*

**THE SHORTER CATECHISM.** Part I. By Rev. Professor SALMOND, D.D.

**THE PERIOD OF THE JUDGES.** By the Rev. Professor PATERSON, M.A., Edinburgh.

**OUTLINES OF PROTESTANT MISSIONS.** By JOHN ROBSON, D.D.

“We have found it all that a teacher could want.”—*Ecclesiastical Gazette.*

**LIFE OF THE APOSTLE PETER.** By Rev. Professor SALMOND, D.D.

“A work which only an accomplished scholar could have produced.”—*Christian Leader.*

**OUTLINES OF EARLY CHURCH HISTORY.** By the late Rev. HENRY WALLIS SMITH, D.D.

“An admirable sketch of early Church history.”—*Baptist.*

**LIFE OF DAVID.** By the late Rev. PETER THOMSON, M.A.

“I think it is excellent indeed, and have seen nothing of the kind so good.”—Rev. STANLEY LEATHES, D.D.

---

T. & T. CLARK,

38 GEORGE STREET, EDINBURGH.



## BIBLE CLASS PRIMERS—*continued.*

**LIFE OF MOSES.** By Rev. JAMES IVERACH, M.A.

"Accurately done, clear, mature, and scholarly."—*Christian.*

**LIFE OF PAUL.** By PATON J. GLOAG, D.D.

"This little book could not well be surpassed."—*Daily Review.*

**LIFE AND REIGN OF SOLOMON.** By Rev. RAYNER WINTERBOTHAM, M.A., LL.B.

"Every teacher should have it."—Rev. C. H. SPURGEON.

**THE HISTORY OF THE REFORMATION.** By Rev. Professor WITHEROW.

"A vast amount of information set forth in a clear and concise manner."—*United Presbyterian Magazine.*

**THE KINGS OF ISRAEL.** By Rev. W. WALKER, M.A.

"A masterpiece of lucid condensation."—*Christian Leader.*

**THE KINGS OF JUDAH.** By Rev. Professor GIVEN, Ph.D.

"Admirably arranged; the style is sufficiently simple and clear to be quite within the compass of young people."—*British Messenger.*

**JOSHUA AND THE CONQUEST.** By Rev. Professor CROSKERY.

"This carefully written manual will be much appreciated."—*Daily Review.*

---

**BIBLE WORDS AND PHRASES,** Explained and Illustrated. By Rev. CHARLES MICHIE, M.A. 18mo, cloth, 1s.

"Will be found interesting and instructive, and of the greatest value to young students and teachers."—*Athenæum.*

---

T. & T. CLARK,  
38 GEORGE STREET, EDINBURGH.

# DR LUTHARDT'S WORKS.

*In Three handsome crown 8vo Volumes, price 6s. each.*

“We do not know any volumes so suitable in these times for young men entering on life, or, let us say, even for the library of a pastor called to deal with such, than the three volumes of this series. We commend the whole of them with the utmost cordial satisfaction. They are altogether quite a specialty in our literature.”—*Weekly Review*.

## APOLOGETIC LECTURES

ON THE

## FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS OF CHRISTIANITY.

*Sixth Edition.*

By C. E. LUTHARDT, D.D., LEIPZIG.

“From Dr Luthardt's exposition even the most learned theologians may derive invaluable criticism, and the most acute disputants supply themselves with more trenchant and polished weapons than they have as yet been possessed of.”—*Bell's Weekly Messenger*.

---

## APOLOGETIC LECTURES

ON THE

## SAVING TRUTHS OF CHRISTIANITY.

*Fifth Edition.*

“Dr Luthardt is a profound scholar, but a very simple teacher, and expresses himself on the gravest matters with the utmost simplicity, clearness, and force.”—*Literary World*.

---

## APOLOGETIC LECTURES

ON THE

## MORAL TRUTHS OF CHRISTIANITY.

*Third Edition.*

“The ground covered by this work is, of course, of considerable extent, and there is scarcely any topic of specifically moral interest now under debate in which the reader will not find some suggestive saying. The volume contains, like its predecessors, a truly wealthy apparatus of notes and illustrations.”—*English Churchman*.

---

T. & T. CLARK,

38 GEORGE STREET, EDINBURGH.

Bible Class Primers.

EDITED BY PROFESSOR SALMOND, D.D., ABERDEEN.

---

AN EXPOSITION  
OF THE  
SHORTER CATECHISM.

PART FIRST. (Q. 1 to 38).

CONTAINING THE

*SUMMARY OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE.*

BY THE EDITOR.

*S. D. F. Salmond*

---

Edinburgh:

T. & T. CLARK, 38 GEORGE STREET.



# THE SHORTER CATECHISM.

---

## PART FIRST.

### THE SUMMARY OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE.

---

#### *HISTORICAL NOTE.*

The word *Catechism* comes from a Greek term, which means to *utter sound*, and so to *teach by the voice*. A Catechism of religion, therefore, is a book which gives instruction in the principles of the religion ; and as it is intended primarily for oral instruction, it takes the form of question and answer.

This one is called the *Shorter Catechism*, in order to distinguish it from another, known as the *Larger Catechism*, which was prepared for learners who have already some knowledge of the doctrines of the Christian religion.

Both were the work of the famous Westminster Assembly. This great gathering of divines was called together by the Long Parliament for the purpose of carrying out the reformation of the Church of England more thoroughly in doctrine, worship, and discipline. It sought to purify it from things not consistent with the Word of God, and to bring it into greater harmony with the Reformed Churches of Scotland and the Continent. It consisted of 151 English members, of whom 121 were clergymen and 30 lay assessors. To these were added certain commissioners from Scotland, who were nominated by the General Assembly of the Church and occupied a distinct position in the Assembly. The Scotch

commissioners who were originally appointed were eight in number, and should be known to the youth of Scotland. Five of them were ministers—namely, Alexander Henderson, rector of the University of Edinburgh, and the successor of John Knox and Andrew Melville as leader of the church; Robert Baillie, Professor of Divinity and Principal of the University of Glasgow, who has been called “the pleasantest of letter-gossips”; George Gillespie, minister at Edinburgh, the youngest of the party, but a man of conspicuous ability in debate; Samuel Rutherford, Professor of Divinity and Principal of St Mary’s College, St Andrews, “the true Saint and Martyr of the Covenant”; and Robert Douglas, who, however, did not take his seat. The remaining three were elders—namely, John, Earl of Cassilis; John, Lord Maitland, afterwards Duke of Lauderdale, who ended by becoming the fierce persecutor of the cause which at first he fervently supported; and Sir Archibald Johnstone of Warriston, one of the judges of the Court of Session, and in many respects a remarkable man.

The Assembly was opened in Westminster Abbey on the 1st July 1643. In accordance with its appointment it laboured diligently at the preparation of a creed, a form of worship, and a system of church government, which might be used in common by the three kingdoms of England, Ireland, and Scotland. It took about five and a half years to finish its proper work, but it sat altogether for nearly nine years. Its last session was held on the 25th March 1652, a few weeks before the remnant of the Long Parliament, known in English history as “the Rump,” was dissolved by Oliver Cromwell. Different parties were represented in it—the Episcopalians, the Presbyterians, the Independents, the Erastians or those who held that the Church should be dealt with simply as a department of the State. But the Presbyterians were the strongest party. This Assembly ranks



among the greatest of all the Protestant councils. It has been acknowledged, even by those who have not been in sympathy with its decisions, to have been distinguished in no ordinary measure by piety, learning, ability, and the devout determination to make the Word of God, and that only, the rule of all that should be believed and done in the Church of Christ.

The Shorter Catechism may be regarded as the choicest fruit of the labours of the Westminster Assembly. Many Catechisms had been published before this one. The troubled years between 1600 and 1645 were remarkable for the number they produced. But the Shorter Catechism surpassed them all, and remains the most finished expression of the robust faith of our Puritan forefathers. It seems to have been prepared for the most part, if not entirely, in the year 1647. It was approved by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland on the 28th July 1648, and by the Scottish Parliament on the 7th February 1649. The God-fearing people of these days received it gladly, and it soon became extensively used by others as well as Presbyterians. No Protestant Catechism, indeed, has been accepted so widely, or by so many different branches of the Church of the Reformation, with the exception of Luther's Catechism and the Heidelberg Catechism. It has been rightly classed with these two, and described as "one of the three typical Catechisms of Protestantism which are likely to last to the end of time."

It is as simple in its plan as it is clear, concise, and well-considered in its language. The first three Questions are introductory and deal with the foundations of religion. The body of the Catechism commences at the Fourth Question, and is constructed in two main divisions. The first is a summary of doctrine, and extends to the Thirty-eighth Question. The second is a summary of duty, and extends from



the Thirty-ninth Question to the end. All is arranged in the most careful and orderly way within each of these divisions. The logical connection of the various Questions which make up this First Part, with which we have at present to deal, will be seen as we proceed. The doctrine of *God* is unfolded first as regards His nature, His attributes, and the persons in the Godhead (Questions 4, 5, 6) ; then as regards His decrees and His works, including the Creation and Fall of Man (Questions 7-20) ; then as regards the person and work of the Son (Questions 21-28) ; and finally as regards the work of the Spirit (Questions 29-38).

The Shorter Catechism has never failed to be esteemed where Bible truth has been loved, and the principles of the great Puritans valued. Our own country owes more to it than we can well say. It has won the admiration of the best men, and should continue to be dear to the sons of Scotland. One of the most famous of recent Scotchmen has spoken of its First Question in terms which should be treasured by the youth of our country. They show what the Catechism as a whole may be to us, if we use it worthily. "The older I grow," said Thomas Carlyle, "and I now stand upon the brink of eternity—the more comes back to me the first sentence in the Catechism which I learned when a child, and the fuller and deeper its meaning becomes : 'What is the chief end of man ? To glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever.'"

---

## THE EXPOSITION.

QUESTION 1. *WHAT is the chief end of man?*

*Answer.* Man's chief end is to glorify God,<sup>a</sup> and to enjoy him for ever.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> 1 Cor. x. 31. Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

<sup>b</sup> Ps. lxxiii. 25. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. V. 26. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

The Catechism does not pause to prove the truth of the religion which it explains. It begins by stating at once in the broadest and most scriptural terms, what true religion implies, what it requires, and what it gives.

**Man's Chief End.** The word 'end,' which means properly the 'extreme point of a thing,' may denote either the point which is reached or the point which is aimed at. So it comes to be used for both *result* and *object*. It has the latter sense when we speak of a man's "private ends." It has the same sense occasionally in the Bible, as when Paul says that "the end of the commandment is charity" (1 Tim. i. 5). So here it signifies the *object* for which man exists, the *purpose* of his life, the *aim* set before him. The Catechism speaks, however, of man's '*chief end*,' to indicate that there are various objects which he has to fulfil, the service of his fellow-men, the performance of ordinary duty, and the like; while yet there is one which is superior to all, and to which all others look.

**Is to glorify God.** The supreme object which is proposed to man implies two things. First, it is to *glorify God*. The word 'glorify' means sometimes to *make* one glorious, or bestow glory on one; sometimes to *acknowledge* one to be glorious, or to show forth his glory. In the former sense both

Christ Himself (Acts iii. 13) and the justified (Rom. viii. 30) are said to be glorified by God. But in this sense God cannot be glorified by us; for we can add nothing to the perfection which He has. In the latter sense the word occurs very frequently in Scripture, and in this we can glorify God, and are appointed to do so, by confessing Him to be glorious, honouring and praising Him as such, and making His majesty and goodness known to others. Notice in what ways the Bible shows God to be glorified by His servants, *e.g.*, by praise (Psalm l. 23), by the example of good works (Matt. v. 16), by a Christian death (John xxi. 19), &c.

But it is also to **enjoy Him for ever**: joy is the emotion which is kindled in us by good. To "enjoy God," therefore, is to have Him as our own, and to find the good of our life in Him. The psalms and prophecies are full of the feeling that God is our true joy, because He is our highest good (Ps. xvi. 11; xliii. 4; Isa xxix. 19). The New Testament, in like manner, teaches us to rejoice in the Lord (Phil. iii. 1; iv. 4). And as this is the one true joy, so is it the only *lasting* joy. Hence the addition of the 'for ever.' These two things, the glorifying of God and the enjoying him, go together. The latter cannot exist apart from the former; and the measure of the joy will be according to the measure of the glorifying.

No book has ever proposed so lofty a purpose for man, or set before him so exalted a destiny as the Bible. If it gives the most humbling view of what we have become by sin, it gives the highest view of what God designed us to be. It tells us that when He created us, He made us capable of fulfilling the supreme object, and of attaining the highest good, in our life. It tells us also that His grace makes this possible for us still.

QUESTION 2. *WHAT rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?*

*Answer.* The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments,<sup>a</sup> is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.<sup>b</sup>

a. Eph. ii. 20. And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.

2 Tim. iii. 16. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

b 1 John i. 3. That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

To reach so lofty an end we require direction. Having stated, therefore, what we are meant to make of our life, and what our life is meant to yield us, the Catechism next explains what guidance is provided, and where it is to be found.

**The Word of God :** that is, the revelation of God, that by which He makes His will known. The security that the purpose of our life may be made good is the fact that He who has set this purpose before us is not an unknown God, but One who has opened His mind to us. God reveals Himself and His will to us in various ways. He does so in Jesus Christ (see Heb. i. 1 and Question 24); and as Christ is the final revelation of God's mind, He is above all else *the Word* (John i. 1). But God makes Himself known also in nature, the soul of man, and the Bible. The last is intended here.

**Which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.** So it is said to be *contained in the Scriptures*, the term 'Scriptures' meaning simply 'writings,' but being used distinctively of the sacred writings which make up the Bible (*e.g.*, Luke xxiv. 27). These are further described as *of the Old and New Testaments*, to indicate the two great periods or



dispensations to which they belong. The English word *testament* means much the same as a *will*—that is to say, the writing by which a man declares how he will have his property disposed of after his death. Here, however, it represents a Bible word which means simply a *covenant*, and it is applied to the two *economies*, *administrations*, or *covenants* as they are called, under which God placed first His Jewish people and then Christians. The Jewish Scriptures, therefore, are to be accepted as containing the ‘Word of God’ as well as the Christian.

**Is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him.** This *Word* is stated to be the *rule to direct us*—that is to say, the guide and standard we are to follow in all matters of religious knowledge and duty. With reference to this, the Scriptures are called *canonical*, a term taken from the Greek word which means a *rule*, and designating the writings which are to be received as the authoritative declaration of God’s mind. But it is said also to be ‘the *only* rule,’ &c. This expresses the Protestant view of Scripture as distinguished from the views of other churches which do not give the same supreme place to it. It refers specially to the Roman Catholic doctrine, which joins *tradition* to Scripture. By this it means a body of truth which it supposes to have come down in oral form from Christ and the Apostles; and it teaches that this unwritten tradition is to be honoured both as the interpreter of Scripture and as a distinct section of revelation. Our doctrine, on the contrary, is that all that is necessary for faith and duty is given us in Scripture, and that the written Word of God is so complete in itself that nothing is to be added to it by men. In virtue also of the light which is in it, and by the teaching of the Spirit of truth, it is made so clear to the spiritual understanding that it needs no official interpreter, such as Pope or Church Council.

Notice how constantly both our Lord Himself and

His apostles appealed to the Scriptures (Matt. xxi. 42 ; xxii. 29 ; Acts xvii. 2 ; Rom. iv. 3 ; 1 Pet. ii. 6 ; James iv. 5). Notice, too, the character given to the Bereans (Acts xvii. 11), to Apollos (Acts xviii. 24), to Timothy (2 Tim. iii. 15). Commit to memory the golden text, John v. 39.

QUESTION 3. *WHAT do the Scriptures principally teach ?*

*Answer.* The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> 2 Tim. i. 13. Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

This question states the things for which above all else we are to study the Word of God, and follow it as our rule. In so doing, it gives a brief summary of of all that is to be explained at length in the rest of the Catechism.

**The Scriptures principally teach.** They teach us many things, being largely occupied with narratives of historical personages and events, laws and institutions. All these are of interest and value. But there are two things which make the main message of the Scriptures. The first is, **what we are to believe concerning God.** The purpose of the Scriptures is to help us to know God. This knowledge is here called *belief*, because it is a knowledge which comes not by immediate, personal observation, but mediately by teaching or testimony. The second is, **what duty God requires of man ;** in other words, what we ought to do to God. For *duty* is just that which is *due* from one to another.

These two things, too, are vitally connected. Our life in the sight of God will be according to our thoughts of God Himself. To be what God requires

of us, we must believe worthily in God Himself (see Heb. xi. 6).

#### QUESTION 4. *WHAT is God?*

*Answer.* God is a Spirit,<sup>a</sup> infinite,<sup>b</sup> eternal,<sup>c</sup> and unchangeable,<sup>d</sup> in his being,<sup>e</sup> wisdom,<sup>f</sup> power,<sup>g</sup> holiness,<sup>h</sup> justice, goodness, and truth.<sup>i</sup>

<sup>a</sup> John iv. 24. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

<sup>b</sup> Job xi. 7. Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?

<sup>c</sup> Ps. xc. 2. From everlasting to everlasting thou art God.

<sup>d</sup> James i. 17. The Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

<sup>e</sup> Exod. iii. 14. And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

<sup>f</sup> Ps. cxlvii. 5. Great is our Lord, and of great power; his understanding is infinite.

<sup>g</sup> Rev. iv. 8. Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

<sup>h</sup> Rev. xv. 4. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy.

<sup>i</sup> Exod. xxxiv. 6. The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. V. 7. Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.

We begin here the statement of Christian doctrine, to which the previous questions are introductory. This section extends to question 38, and unfolds what we are to believe concerning God. The Catechism gives no proof of the existence of God. It takes that for granted, as the Bible does, and starts at once with a statement of what God is, which it would be difficult to match for dignity and Scriptural form combined with brevity.

**God is a Spirit:** this is the declaration of Him who has authority, such as no other can claim, to tell us what God is (John iv. 24). God is so great that He receives many different names in Scripture, and the largest variety of terms can, at the best, convey only a partial idea of what He is. He re-



ceives also three memorable designations, *God is light, God is love, God is a Spirit*. All three occur in the writings of John (1 John i. 5 ; iv. 8 ; John iv. 24). They are not formal definitions, however, but are meant for practical purposes. Even this one, *God is a Spirit*, is given by Christ not as a theoretical expression of what God is, but to help a poor woman to understand what it is to worship God. Of the three this one is the largest and most absolute. Christ's use of it warrants us to believe that God is in perfect measure that which we understand by the word *Spirit* in ourselves. *Spirit* is the opposite of *body* or *matter*. We are to think of God, therefore, as without bodily parts, not to be seen by the bodily eye or grasped by the bodily hand. Matter is unconscious, inert, locally confined. Spirit is conscious, active, limited to no particular place. As *Spirit*, therefore, God is a thinking, active, free being, or, in brief, a Personal God.

This Spirit, who is God, is described next by three qualities : **infinite**, that is, unlimited, subject to no restriction of space or anything else (1 Kings viii. 27) ; **eternal**, without beginning or end, subject to none of the restrictions of time (1 Tim. i. 17) ; **unchangeable**, subject to none of the inconstancies and uncertainties which belong to us (Mal. iii. 6).

He is further described in respect of seven great properties which are His : **Being**, that is, nature or existence. God indeed is the only real existence, because He is the only One who depends for His existence on nothing outside Himself. **Wisdom**, not merely *knowledge* in the ordinary sense, but the intelligence which at once sees all, and directs all to great and gracious ends (Rom. xi. 33). So God is often contrasted in the Old Testament with the unconscious and unintelligent deities of the heathen. In the New Testament He is the '*only wise*' God (1 Tim. i. 17) ; and His '*manifold wisdom*' is declared to appear in the Gospel (Eph. iii. 10). **Power**, or

capacity to do. God alone has *power* in the sense of ability to do all that He wills. He is Almighty, Omnipotent. He bears that name in the New Testament, especially in the book of Revelation (i. 8, &c.). He bears it more frequently in the Old Testament, and most particularly in the history of the patriarchs (Gen. xvii. 1 ; xxviii. 3 ; Exod. vi. 3, &c.). **Holiness**, a term of the same family as *wholeness*, *wholesomeness*, *health*, and expressing the moral elevation of God. It has the idea of separateness. Israel as a *holy* people is a people set apart to God. So the holiness of God is His absolute freedom from the impurity and imperfection which belong to us. It fills a very large space in the Old Testament (Exod. xv. 11 ; Isaiah vi. 3, &c.). Christ Himself applies it to God in prayer (John xvii. 11). In virtue of this holiness, God cannot look with pleasure or with indifference on anything that is not wholly right and good. The God of the Bible is entirely distinguished from the gods of heathenism by this great quality of holiness. **Justice**, a sense of this is natural to men, and thus we can better understand what justice is in God than what holiness is. It means that all that He is and all that He does are in perfect harmony with the eternal law of right. It means also that He deals with men according to the moral quality of their works, punishing evil and wrong, rewarding the good and right (Psalm lxxxix. 14 ; Rev. xv. 3). **Goodness**, God is good in two senses, viz., in the larger sense of being morally perfect, as when Jesus says there is none good but one that is God (Matt. xix. 17), and in the more definite sense of *kind* or *benevolent*. It is probably the latter that is meant here. It is that in God in virtue of which He seeks the happiness of His creatures, and bestows on them what is best (Ps. xxxiii. 5 ; cxlv. 9). It is called *mercy* when it is shown to the miserable ; *long-suffering* when it delays the punishment of the guilty ; *grace* when it is bestowed on the unworthy ;

*compassion* when it looks to the needy, the sorrowful, the suffering. It extends to all God's creatures (Psalm cxlv. 9). It becomes *love* when its object is man. It is seen in its highest perfection in the gift of Christ and His Gospel. Truth, here probably much the same as faithfulness. God is *true* in the sense that He is *real* as opposed to the false or pretended; and in the sense that He is *reliable* or *veracious*. Because He is true all His promises and all His threatenings are alike certain, and He is Himself to be implicitly trusted in all that He says. See such great declarations of the Old Testament as Deut. xxxii. 4, Numb. xxiii. 19. For His *faithfulness* see Psalm xxxvi. 5, Isaiah xxv. 1, and these important passages of the New Testament, 1 Cor. i. 9, 1 Thes. v. 24, 2 Tim. ii. 13.

The adjectives in this question qualify all the nouns. God is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His *being*. He is also infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His *wisdom* and all the other matters that follow. These are known in theology as the *attributes*, by which are meant qualities which can be ascribed to a person. They have been divided into several classes by theologians, as *e.g.*, into *natural* and *moral*, or into *communicable* and *incommunicable*. The *communicable* attributes are those, such as wisdom and the others which follow it here, which man can to some extent share with God. The *incommunicable* are those, such as infinity and eternity, and immutability, which cannot be ascribed to man. The attributes are all in harmony with each other. God's goodness is a holy goodness; His power is a power used with wisdom; His truth is a truth in the service of justice.

---

### QUESTION 5. *ARE there more Gods than one?*

*Answer.* There is but one only,<sup>a</sup> the living and true God.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Deut. vi. 4. Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord.

<sup>b</sup> Jer. x. 10. But the Lord is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting King.

This question deals with the *Unity* of God. There are two kinds of Unity or Oneness—that of *number*, and that of *species* or *kind*. Hence, it is said, not merely *there is but One*, but **there is but One only**. There is one God, not two or many gods; and this one God is *only* God, unique and incomparable, such in kind that there is and can be none like Him (2 Sam. vii. 22; Isaiah xlv. 6). This truth was taught by the Old Testament in opposition to the heathen belief in a plurality of gods, which is called *Polytheism*. It is opposed also to what is called *Dualism*, or the belief in the existence of two eternal and conflicting powers, such as was held by the ancient Persians. The unity of God was lost sight of even by the greatest nations of the old world, and with the most disastrous effects on their moral character. Even Israel for many centuries betrayed a fatal disposition to fall away from it.

**The Living**—a frequent and expressive title of God. It means that He has life in Himself, and is the source of all life in all others (Ps. xxxvi. 9). But it means also that, having life in Himself, He is able to reveal Himself, enter into fellowship with men, and do great things for them. So it is for the *living* God that the saints of the Old Testament cried out (Ps. xlii. 2; lxxxiv. 2); and the prophets often contrast the *living* God of Israel with the gods of heathenism, who could do nothing for their worshippers. Not less significant is the use of this title in the New Testament, in such passages as Acts xiv. 15; 2 Cor. iii. 3, &c. Notice how Christ



speaks of *the living Father* (John vi. 57); how Christ Himself is acknowledged in Peter's great confession as the *Son of the living God* (Matt. xvi. 16); how believers are called the *children of the living God* (Rom. ix. 26); how the church is called the *Church of the living God* (1 Tim. iii. 15). And true God—a term used by Christ Himself (John xvii. 3), and joined with the word *living* by Paul (1 Thess. i. 9). Here, probably, it means *real* as opposed to what is merely in semblance. The *true* God is the God who really exists, and is all that He seems or professes to be.

QUESTION 6. *How many persons are there in the Godhead?*

*Answer.* There are three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost;<sup>a</sup> and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Matt. xxviii. 19. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

<sup>b</sup> 1 John v. 7. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

This question carries us from the Unity of God to the doctrine of the Trinity. The term *Trinity*, which comes from two Latin words meaning *three* and *one*, does not occur in Scripture, but has been formed in order shortly to express what Scripture teaches about God. Mohammedanism, the religion of the false Prophet, also holds the doctrine that there is one God. But the unity ascribed to God by that religion is very different from the unity in which we believe. The oneness affirmed of God by the Bible is a oneness of an entirely incomparable kind. It is a oneness containing an infinite fulness of life and admitting of distinctions and fellowship within it.

There are three persons in the Godhead. By *Godhead*, which is the same as *Godhood*, we mean the Divine Nature as a whole ; and by *person*, a distinct *subsistence* in that Nature. The God of Revelation is unlike any other God that has ever been believed in, because while He is One, His Nature or Godhood is not a solitary unit, but has within it three subsistences. These are called *persons* to indicate that they are not merely three *manifestations* or *energies* of a single Divine power, but three distinct lives, or Selves, within the One Divine Nature, having the properties which distinguish life between person and person amongst ourselves. In naming them *persons*, it is not meant that the word can give any sufficient idea of the mysterious mode of life in God, but that they are revealed to us in the Bible as having relations to each other, such as we see persons have with persons. **The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost:** these are the names used by the Bible itself as best fitted to convey to us some conception of the Divine realities. They are names which express all that is highest, most vital, and most gracious in the revelation of God given us in the Gospel. They indicate that each of the Persons in the Godhead has His characteristic property. It is the property of the First Person to receive His life from none ; of the Second, to have His life from the First, and so He is the *only begotten Son* (John iii. 16) ; of the Third, to have His life from the First and the Second, and so He is revealed as *proceeding* from the Father and the Son (John xv. 26). The three Persons are also revealed as having three several parts in the work of redemption. That work originates in the Father's counsel and love ; it is executed by the Son ; it is applied to men by the Spirit. **And these three are one God:** it is not meant that God is three in the same sense and to the same effect as He is one ; neither is the threefoldness of the Godhead a mere matter of numbers. It is a threefoldness of

personal life and fellowship within the Unity. And the Unity is not inconsistent with this. For in the Godhead there is but one fountain of Divine life, namely, the Father, from whom the Second Person and the Third Person have eternally, and each in His own distinct way, their life. **The same in Substance.** The word *substance* is much the same as *essence*. It means literally, '*that which stands under.*' The *substance* of matter is that which is beneath all the qualities of matter, hardness and the like. So the word *substance*, when used of God, means the mysterious background of being in which all His attributes inhere—the essence to which this wisdom, holiness, &c., all point. When it is said that the three Persons are *the same in substance*, it is meant that, though they have distinct properties, they are one in essence, each having the entire Divine Nature. **Equal in power and glory.** If they have the same essence, it follows that there can be no differences in might or in majesty between them. Each has the same Divine attributes and the same claims to worship and honour. They are, therefore, associated on equal terms by our Lord Himself in His great commission to His disciples (Matt. xxviii. 19). But let it be noticed that the passage 1 John v. 7, which is given as one of the proofs, does not apply, because it is found to be no part of the original text.

The form in which the doctrine of the Trinity is expressed in the Creeds and Catechisms is the result of a long process of thought in the Church. The doctrine itself was not revealed all at once, but very gradually. It could not be fully revealed till Christ Himself came and spoke to us of God. So, while it is only in germ in the Old Testament, it is unfolded to us in the New Testament, and most distinctly in John's writings.



# QUESTION 7. *WHAT are the decrees of God?*

*Answer.* The decrees of God are his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Eph. i. 11. Being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will: V. 12. That we should be to the praise of His glory.

Like the former, this question touches the deepest things of revealed truth. How the sovereignty of God and the freedom of man are to be reconciled; how sin could rise and how it can continue if God is infinite in holiness and power—these are questions which have always been debated and yet never fully solved.

**The decrees of God.** A *decree* means a *decision*, a *determination*. In speaking of the *decrees of God*, therefore, we mean that the Creator and Ruler of all has His thoughts of what should be, so that all that exists or shall exist is the result of what He determines in His own mind. **Are His eternal purpose.** There are two things in this definition of the decrees. The word *eternal* tells us that they are not formed in *time*, or as emergencies arise. They are before all time, God having in His mind the plan of all that was to be before anything was. The term *purpose* (not *purposes*) tells us that the decrees of God are not, as is the case with our thoughts, so many different determinations coming one after the other, but a unity, one great plan. In His own eternity God had before His mind all that was to be called into existence, and decided what the universe should be, and what part each object and each life should have in it. **According to the counsel of His will.** When we form plans, we deliberate, balancing one thing against another, and often seeking the advice of others. So God is said

to decree according to *counsel*, and not arbitrarily, unthinkingly, or capriciously. But it is said to be 'the counsel of *His will*,' to indicate that His decrees proceed simply on His own views of what is best. The clause is directed against those theories of God's plan and purpose, which represent Him as first foreseeing what men's conduct will be, and then forming His decrees about them according to that. It means that in eternally determining what the lots of men should be, He has been moved only by His own supreme will and wisdom, and not by anything which He has foreknown in men themselves. He has reasons for all that He decides upon, but these reasons are not taken from anything outside Himself. **Whereby for His own glory.** In all that He does this is the last and highest end—the manifestation of His own perfections. All other ends, such as the good of His creatures, look to this and serve it (Rom. xi. 36). **He hath fore-ordained**, or determined beforehand. **Whatsoever comes to pass.** Nothing is excepted from the sweep of His fore-ordination. All things, small and great, good and evil, the events of the world and the free acts of men, come to pass only by His will. Yet not all in the same way. Each is ordained according to its own nature, the events of the material world according to the laws of that world, the free acts of man according to the laws of mind. The decree embraces the means as well as the result, and makes the result certain through the means. In some cases it works efficaciously, in others only permissively. Hence God is not the author of sin, because while He decrees to permit it, He does not decree to cause it.

That the decrees are *eternal* is proved by many passages, such as Eph. i. 4, iii. 11, 1 Cor. ii. 7. That they embrace all things, even the free acts of men and even those of wicked men, is proved by such passages as Eph. ii. 10, Acts ii. 23, iv. 27, 28. That they are according to the counsel of His will, free

and sovereign, is seen from such passages as Eph. i. 11.

The doctrine of the decrees should inspire us with humility, as it teaches our dependence. But it should also encourage us to confidence and fearlessness; for it teaches that there is no such thing as chance or accident, but that all things are as God decides or permits.

QUESTION 8. *How doth God execute His decrees?*

*Answer.* God executeth his decrees in the works of creation<sup>a</sup> and providence.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Rev. iv. 11. Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created.

<sup>b</sup> Dan. iv. 35. He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth.

---

The decrees are formed in God's own mind before all time, and make one timeless purpose. Their execution, however, or the carrying them out in actual fact, belongs to time. From the beginning it has been going on, and we know not how far it yet is from being completed. Hence the use of the present tense—*executeth*. Two boundless fields are mentioned in which the execution of the decrees takes place—*creation* and *providence*, which terms are to be immediately explained. All the objects and processes of the former, all the events of the latter, and in brief all things which appear in time, are the results of what has been eternally purposed by God, and bear the impress of His mind.

---

## QUESTION 9. *WHAT is the work of creation?*

*Answer.* The work of creation is, God's making all things of nothing,<sup>a</sup> by the word of his power,<sup>b</sup> in the space of six days, and all very good.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Gen. i. 1. In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

<sup>b</sup> Heb. xi. 3. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God; so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear

<sup>c</sup> Gen. i. 31. And God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

---

**The work of creation.** The word 'creation' means the calling the non-existent into existence. Here it is termed a *work*, because the record of the making of the world, which is given in Genesis i., represents it as occupying a certain space of time, and taking place by several stages. Is God's making all things. Creation is a Divine act. No other power but God's is capable of it; neither could things in any sense originate themselves. It also embraces all things, without exception, which are outside of God Himself. Whatever exists, even the free spirit of man, owes its first origination to God. **Out of nothing.** The religions and systems of thought which the mind of man has constructed have grappled with the problem of the origin of things, and have given different answers. Some have solved it by saying that matter is eternal, and that the Divine act of creation is simply the giving form to what already existed. Others have taught that created things were made of God's own being, so that they are *emanations*, things evolved, from Himself. In opposition to all such doctrines of men, the Bible teaches that matter is not eternal; that things material and things immaterial alike owe their existence to Him; that they were formed of *nothing*, there being no previously existing matter



out of which they could be made ; and that nothing, not even the soul of man, is an emanation or part of God's own being. By the word of His power. In creating, God used nothing and needed nothing but the expression of His own will. His *word* carried the *power* with it. The Bible reveals the fact that all three Persons of the Trinity had to do with the work of creation. The Son is represented as the Agent by whom God made the world (John i. 3 ; Heb. i. 2) ; and the Spirit is represented as the principle of life in creation (Gen. i. 2 ; Ps. civ. 30). But the work needed no means or instrumentality outside the Godhead. So in Genesis i. we read at each state simply that 'God said,' and it was done. In the space of six days. This clause gives the substance of what is said in Gen. i. about the order of the creative process. How the 'days' which are spoken of there are to be understood, and how the form of the narrative is to be interpreted, are matters of difficulty. The science of geology teaches, however, that created things have come into existence by distinct stages and in a certain progressive order. And all very good. This clause also repeats what is stated in Genesis i. It was held by some of old that the world was the result of a struggle between two eternal powers or principles, one good and the other evil, and that, therefore, it was not altogether good. It is taught by Scripture that, however evil things may be now, all as they came first from God's own hand, were 'very good.' By this it is meant that they were all that God designed them to be, and fully fitted to work out the great ends for which they were made.

The Bible further teaches that the work of creation was God's own *free* work, there being nothing to make it *necessary* for Him to do it. This doctrine of creation, in the proper sense of a making out of nothing, is a doctrine of revelation only. Man's natural idea is that God makes in the way man himself makes—that is to say, by the use of existing

material. Hence in Hebrews xi. 3, it is said to be ‘*through faith*,’ that ‘we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God.’

### QUESTION 10. *How did God create man?*

*Answer.* God created man male and female, after his own image,<sup>a</sup> in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness,<sup>b</sup> with dominion over the creatures.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Gen. i. 27. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him: male and female created he them.

<sup>b</sup> Col. iii. 10. And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.

Eph. iv. 24. And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

<sup>c</sup> Gen. i. 28. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

---

The creation of all things leads next to the creation of man. It is to help us to understand man's relation to God that the creation of all things is explained in the Bible. In the record of Genesis, too, man is represented as God's last and crowning work. Hence his formation is specially dealt with here.

**God created man male and female.** As there was fellowship between Father, Son, and Spirit in the Godhead, and God Himself was not solitary, so man, His highest creature, was not made to be alone; neither was he to be limited to the fellowship of the lower creatures. He was made for social life and to find fellowship with a companion like himself (Gen. ii. 20-23; Matt. xix. 4). The Catechism says nothing of man's *antiquity*. Neither does it state, but rather takes for granted, the oneness of the race; as to which, see Acts xvii. 26. **After His own image, or likeness.** An incalculably greater thing is stated here than what is expressed in the former clause, and man is the only work of God of which this is said. This ‘image of God’ means

more than immortality, or the possession of reason, or power over the creatures, or the erect posture. In the largest sense it points to all that is Godlike in man, and is defined as "the peculiar excellence of man as a rational and moral being." It means that God made man as like Himself as creature could be made—capable of an intelligent, free, personal life like His own and essentially different from that of the lower creatures. In knowledge, righteousness, and holiness: being made in God's image he was endowed with these godlike qualities. From the first he had such a measure of knowledge as his position required—especially knowledge of God and of his own relation and duty to God. From the first, too, he had righteousness, a mind thinking and a will acting in perfect accordance with the eternal law of right; in other words, he was created not in a state of mere innocence or in a state of balance between good and evil, but in positive *integrity*. From the first, too, he had holiness, or affections set on God, and purity of heart and life. Further, the knowledge and the holiness which he had, while perfect in principle, were not final, but were intended to go on from one degree of perfection to another as man's life and experience went on. With **dominion over the creatures**. The high position of lordship over the other creatures was the direct accompaniment or result of man's likeness to God. So the creatures were brought to Adam to name them (Gen. ii. 19). This headship of man over creation is expressed in Psalm viii.

No system of religion or thought has given so exalted a view of man as the Bible, which shows that, if on one side of his being he is related to the brutes which perish, on the other he is akin to God Himself. The doctrine of the Divine image in man is the doctrine of the kingliness of man. It has been called man's 'title to royalty.'



QUESTION 11. *WHAT are God's works of providence?*

*Answer.* God's works of providence are, his most holy,<sup>a</sup> wise,<sup>b</sup> and powerful preserving<sup>c</sup> and governing all his creatures, and all their actions.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Ps. cxlv. 17. The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.

<sup>b</sup> Isa. xxviii. 29. This also cometh forth from the Lord of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.

<sup>c</sup> Heb. i. 3. Upholding all things by the word of his power.

<sup>d</sup> Ps. ciii. 19. His kingdom ruleth over all.

Mat. x. 29. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.

The word *providence* means literally 'foresight,' and so 'timely care or preparation.' It occurs only once in our English Bible, viz., in Acts xxiv. 2, where, however, it does not refer at all to God's works. As used here, therefore, it is not a directly Scriptural word, but a theological term which expresses Scriptural truth. As applied to God, it means the care and superintendence which He exercises over His creatures and the provision He makes for them.

**God's works of providence.** Creation was called a *work*, because, though it may take place in several stages, the calling of the non-existent into existence is one kind of activity. But we read now of the *works* of providence, because providence includes more than one mode of activity.

**Are His most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing.** Two modes of action are distinguished here. The first is that of 'preserving,' that is to say, the work by which God *keeps* in existence what He has called into existence. This is necessary, because finite things, not having the cause of their existence in themselves, cannot uphold themselves. The second function of providence is that of *gov-*

*erning*, or freely and sovereignly controlling and regulating all things. By this God maintains His Lordship over all that He has made. These two functions are also declared to be exercised in ways entirely worthy of God. Nothing takes place by the Divine superintendence that is not consistent with God's own *holiness*; nothing that will not sooner or later be seen to have been a perfect ordering of things to infinitely *wise* ends; nothing that can come short by lack of *power*.

**All His creatures and all their actions.** The domain of God's providence is unlimited. It covers not only the system of the world as a whole, but all the creatures, and not only the *fortunes* of the creatures, but all their *actions*. Some have taught that it extends to great things, but not to small. The Bible teaches that it is the glory of God to interest Himself in the infinitely little as well as in the infinitely great. But the most mysterious thing is that all the *moral acts* of men are as much under the providential direction and control of God as the events of our lives, while yet men remain responsible, as conscience tells them, for these acts. While, however, God's providence extends to all, it does not act upon all in the same way. It works in one way with the irrational creatures, in another way with man, and in a high and peculiar way with the Church. It works also in such a way that, while all the acts of men are under its control, the sinfulness of their sinful acts belongs entirely to themselves and is in no way due to God.

The doctrine of a Divine Providence is not exclusively a doctrine of Revelation. Great poets and thinkers of the ancient world recognised it in part. But the Bible has made it clear, and has shown it to be the work of a God of love who is our Father. The Old Testament is full of it; and it is repeatedly expressed by our Lord Himself (Matt. vi. 26-32; x. 29-31). It should inspire us with the sense of our de-

pendence, but also with courage, patience, and thankful trust in God. It is one of our plainest warrants for approaching God in prayer. It is opposed to what is called *Deism*, or the doctrine that God sits apart from the world He has made, and takes no direct and living interest in His creatures. "God is not like an architect," said Luther, "who, when he has built a house, or ship, or other work, straightway takes his departure, and asks no more about it; but He abides with His work."

QUESTION 12. *WHAT special act of providence did God exercise toward man in the estate wherein he was created?*

*Answer.* When God had created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience;<sup>a</sup> forbidding him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon the pain of death.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Gal. iii. 12. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.

<sup>b</sup> Gen. ii. 17. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

---

This Question takes us from the general doctrine of Providence to one remarkable instance of it. It calls it a *special* act of providence, because it was something distinct from the ordinary provision made for man's well-being. God not only watched over man, and surrounded him with His care, but placed him under a peculiar and considerate ordinance of His providence, with a view to his highest good.

When God had created man He entered into a covenant. The special thing which God did for man over and above all other arrangements for his protection and happiness is here called the making of a *covenant* with him. By a 'covenant' is usually meant an

agreement or contract between different parties. Here it is applied to the relation established between God and Adam in paradise. The answer gathers up what is told us about that relation in the narrative of Genesis (ii. 15-17; iii. 1-3). When we apply the term 'covenant' to what God does, we must remove from it much that belongs to covenants between man and man. But if a covenant implies something *required*, something *promised*, and something *threatened*, the transaction between God and Adam included these. The vital thing is the fact that man was to be dealt with as a responsible being, placed in a state of probation, capable of doing something for God as well as of receiving something from God.

**Of life with Him :** so called because it promised man *life*, in the fullest sense and most permanent form. It is also called the Covenant of *Works*, because what it offered was to be the reward of what man *did*. It is distinguished from the covenant of *grace* (see Question 20), which also offers *life*, but in a different way.

**On condition of perfect obedience.** As life was the thing *promised*, perfect obedience was the thing *required*, or the condition on which the gift of life depended. By the law of nature written on his heart at creation, man was bound to give perfect obedience to God. But God now asked it in this particular form, and in making this express requirement pledged Himself also to do something for man.

**Forbidding him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.** Man's obedience was to be tested. The test took the form of a *positive precept*, so called in distinction from a *moral law*. The latter is a law belonging to the natural sense of right and wrong, and binding on all men always. The former is a law which is given for a special purpose, and is not always and universally binding. The test was nothing more difficult than abstinence from the fruit



of a single tree. It was the simplest of tests, yet sufficient to reveal the state of heart and the strength of man's purpose of obedience. The tree is called 'the tree of the knowledge of good and evil,' not by reason of any peculiar virtue it had in itself, but because it was the means by which a new kind of knowledge came to men,—in particular, that acquaintance with evil which comes by experience of it.

**Upon the pain of death.** This states the thing *threatened*, or the *penalty* which was to follow in case of disobedience. The word 'pain' is used in the sense of 'penalty,' as in the phrase 'pains and penalties of the law.' It was to be 'death,' not merely physical death, but death in the sense of all that is implied in separation from God.

**QUESTION 13.** *DID our first parents continue in the estate wherein they were created?*

*Answer.* Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created, by sinning against God.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Eccl. vii. 29. God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.

There were wise and holy reasons for subjecting Adam to the test of his obedience. Only a character which has been tried and has stood the test, is of high moral value. Adam was also designed to go on from one degree of perfection and happiness to another, and this probation was to be a means of carrying him on in this moral advance. This Question states the result of the trial.

Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created. The result was that they failed to keep the integrity in which they were made. They 'fell,' it



is said. The word 'fell' is used in Scripture not of Adam but of Judas (Acts i. 25). The theological term 'the Fall,' too, which is employed of the moral catastrophe in which Adam's probation resulted, is not used in the Bible. But it conveniently expresses what is taught at large by the Bible, and particularly in Genesis iii. The clause, 'being left to the freedom of their own will,' states how such a result was possible. God gave man the great possession of free will, or liberty to decide for himself in all things. Had he had less than this he would not have been made in the image of God, and his obedience would have lost its best worth. But in his being free, and not a mere machine in God's hand, lay the possibility of falling as well as of standing. He was created 'able to stand, but free to fall.'

**By sinning against God.** This states in what way he fell, and what his act amounted to. He fell by disregarding God's command or expressed will. His act was something done against God Himself, a thing hitherto unknown to him—a new thing introducing him to a new and sad experience.

#### QUESTION 14. *WHAT is sin?*

*Answer.* Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> 1 John iii. 4. Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

The new thing which entered into man's world with man's fall, and which is shortly termed *sin*, is next defined. It is called by a great variety of names in Scripture, *e.g.*, disobedience, unrighteousness, iniquity, shortcoming, trespass, transgression, error, &c. The idea at the root of the words which give the most general view of it both in the Old Testament and in the New, is that of *missing the*

*mark.* It is defined here in two aspects, a negative and a positive. In both it is described as relating to the law of God. In this the Catechism carefully follows the Bible, which usually represents sin as disobedience to law, and that the law of a God who has revealed Himself.

**Sin is any want of Conformity unto.** This is what sin is *negatively*. It is a want, a defect, a failure—in particular a want of ‘conformity,’ that is, a want of likeness of form to, or correspondence with, the law of God.

**Or transgression of, the law of God.** This is what it is *positively*. It is a ‘transgressing,’ that is, an *overpassing of the proper line*, and so a violation of the law of God.

What ‘the law of God’ is, we find explained in the second part of the Catechism. It is the expression of God’s will and the standard of what He requires of us or forbids in us. We offend against it either by not doing what it commands or by doing what it forbids. So here are two main classes of sins, those of *omission* and those of *commission*. We are apt to think less seriously of the former than of the latter. Yet in His great parable of the talents (Matt. xxv. 24-28), in His solemn discourse on the judgment (Matt. xxv. 41-46), and elsewhere, our Lord teaches the deep guilt of sins of omission. Let it be observed, too, that the Bible does not deal with sin as if it were a matter of acts only. It represents it as having its real seat in the heart and its motives ; and so it speaks of sin as adhering to our habits, dispositions, and affections.

**QUESTION 15.** *WHAT was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created ?*

*Answer.* The sin whereby our first parents fell

from the estate wherein they were created, was their eating the forbidden fruit.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Gen. iii. 6. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. V. 7. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. V. 8. And Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.

The Bible does not state how long our first parents retained their integrity. But it tells us *how* they fell. This question deals with the event which also forms the subject of Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

The sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created, was their eating the forbidden fruit. Notice the word *forbidden* here. There was nothing in the fruit itself, or in the eating, that was necessarily sinful. What made it sinful on this occasion was the fact that it had been *forbidden* by God's express command. The narrative is given at length in Genesis iii. It shows that man fell by yielding to a temptation which came upon him from without. It shows how the temptation found its way to man's heart through things which were innocent in themselves, namely, the natural liking for what is pleasant to eye and taste, and the natural desire for knowledge. It also describes the several steps by which the tempter succeeded in beguiling our first parents.

QUESTION 16. *DID all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression?*

*Answer.* The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity;<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Gen. i. 28. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.

Gen. ii. 16. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: V. 17. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

all mankind, descending from him, by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him, in his first transgression.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>b</sup> Rom. v. 18. By the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation.

This Question brings us to things which have always ranked among the deepest mysteries in Providence as well as in theology. These are the problems of our relation to the first parents of our race, the connection between our present position and their Fall, the way in which God deals with us for their sake and involves us in their sin. The Question touches the doctrine of *Imputation*—the doctrine that what Adam did was laid to our account, so that the penal consequences of the sin of the first parent of the race were made to descend to the children. The term *Imputation* is identical with terms occurring both in the Old Testament and in the New, and meaning to ‘count to one,’ or ‘reckon to one’ (Rom. iv. 6, 8 ; 2 Cor. v. 19).

The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity. This states the fact that when he was put to the test of his obedience under the Covenant of Works (referred to in Question 12) Adam acted as a representative person, and not as a mere individual. He acted not only for himself, but for his posterity, that is, for all who were to descend from him. These were his constituents, and he so represented them that the benefit of his obedience would have gone to them if he had stood the test, while the penalty of his disobedience came to them when he fell. This representative and covenant or *federal* position of Adam is expounded especially by Paul. It was not an arbitrary arrangement. It had a reason in the natural connection between Adam and us, in the fact that he was the natural head and parent of the race. Notice that now for the first time the Catechism calls the first man by the per-



sonal name *Adam*. In the Bible we do not come across the name *Adam* till we reach Genesis v. 2. It is of uncertain meaning, being variously derived from words denoting *red*, the *ground*, the *first*.

**All mankind descending from him, by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him:** that is, all who were naturally descended from him were involved in his sin and fall. They 'sinned in him and fell with him,' not in the sense of personally committing the trespass which he committed, but in the sense of having what he did counted to them, and having to share in its evil consequences or penalties. The words, 'by ordinary generation,' are inserted in order to except Christ. Though He was truly man, He did not descend from Adam in the ordinary way, but had a body prepared for Him by the Holy Ghost. He, therefore, and He alone of all men, was not represented in Adam, nor involved in his sin.

**In his first transgression:** this is added, because it was only in that transgression that Adam acted as representative and covenant head of the race, and consequently, it is only in the results of that first sin that we are involved. In his later acts he stood or fell for himself alone.

**QUESTION 17.** *INTO what estate did the fall bring mankind?*

*Answer.* The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Rom. v. 12. By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

This Question describes briefly, but pungently, the change produced by the Fall. It reduced man to a condition burdened with two great evils, which were punishments of his disobedience.

The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin: it was a state of *sin* in the twofold sense of a burden of



guilt oppressing him, and the power of a disease weakening and corrupting him within.

**And misery.** The condition of moral ruin could not but be a condition of dire unhappiness, whether it was always felt as it should be or not. His condition became the sad reverse of what it had been; his knowledge of the highest things became darkened; his righteousness became evil inclination of will; his holiness became evil affection which debased and enslaved him.

**QUESTION 18.** *WHEREIN consists the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell?*

*Answer.* The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin,<sup>a</sup> the want of original righteousness,<sup>b</sup> and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called Original Sin;<sup>c</sup> together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Rom. v. 19. By one man's disobedience many were made sinners.

<sup>b</sup> Rom. iii. 10. There is none righteous, no, not one.

<sup>c</sup> Eph. ii. 1. You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.

<sup>d</sup> Ps. ii. 5. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity: and in sin did my mother conceive me.

<sup>d</sup> Mat. xv. 19. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies; V. 20. These are the things which defile a man.

---

This Question explains at length the first of the two things in our fallen estate which are mentioned in the previous Answer. It expresses what appears to be the meaning of some of the deepest sayings of Scripture, especially of the writings of Paul.

**The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell.** Our condition now is one of sin and guilt, and it is all important to understand what this implies. The deeper we see the sinfulness to be of what we

are by nature, the higher will be our view of what God's grace is and does for us. So the Catechism sets forth one by one the several things which go to make up this sinfulness.

**Consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin.** It is the *first* sin alone that is mentioned, because, as already stated, it was only in his first trial and offence that Adam stood as our representative, and acted for us as well as himself. The word 'guilt' is taken from a root meaning 'payment' or 'requital,' and is used sometimes in the sense of *criminality*, sometimes in that of *liability to punishment*. Here it has the latter sense—that of liability to punishment, or *legal responsibility*. *Guilt* may come upon a man in this sense, either for his own offences, or for offences committed by others with whom he is connected. So when it is said that the *guilt* of Adam's first sin is on us, it is not meant that we have committed the very sin he committed, nor that his moral character is transferred to us, but that we are held legally responsible along with him, and have to share the evil consequences of his sin. The reason for this lies, as we have seen, in two things—in the general fact that we derive our being from him, and in the particular fact that God entered into a special relation, called a covenant, with Adam and with mankind in Adam. In other words, in the fact that he is our *natural* head, and in the fact that he is our *covenant* or *federal* head.

**The want of original righteousness.** Integrity or rightness of heart and life was lost by the Fall. It is called 'original' because it was man's originally, or by creation.

**And the corruption of his whole nature.** Instead of righteous dispositions and holy affections, we have now a *corrupt* or *unsound* nature—a nature inclined to evil. This 'corruption' is said to extend to the '*whole* nature.' But let this be rightly understood. When we speak of our nature as *corrupt*

or *depraved*, we do not mean that there is no such thing as natural virtue, nor that we are all from our birth utterly incapable of anything that is morally right and just; but that our nature is not what it originally was, that in heart we are estranged from God, and that as regards things spiritual, we have no natural love for them. When we speak of the 'corruption of our *whole* nature,' or of its '*total* depravity,' we do not mean that every man from his earliest youth is as bad as bad can be; but that the disorder caused by the Fall extends to all parts of our nature, so that our understanding of spiritual things is clouded, our will perverted, our affections turned from God and the things of God to other objects.

**Which is commonly called original sin :** so called, not because it is a sin which belonged to the original constitution which we received from our Creator; but because it is a sin which comes with our origin or birth, and is itself the secret origin of every form of sin which shows itself in our life. This is the theological statement of a fact of history and experience, viz., the fact that all men are seen to be sinfully inclined, and that this inclination to evil appears at the earliest period in their life.

**Together with all actual transgressions.** By an 'actual transgression,' we mean an *act* of sin as distinguished from a sinful *nature*, or a *state* of sin. It is sin in the definite form of a sinful thought, a sinful word, or a sinful deed.

**Which proceed from it.** Every distinct form in which sin is seen has its origin in the deep sinfulness of our nature. Actual transgressions are that sinfulness or corruption taking definite shape. The latter is the fountain, the former are the streams.

The term, 'original sin,' has been used in a larger sense by some divines than by others. It is not quite certain, therefore, whether the clause, 'which is commonly called original sin,' is meant to refer only

to the one clause which immediately precedes or to all the preceding clauses. In the former case the Catechism would limit the term, *Original Sin*, to the 'corruption of our whole nature;' in the latter it would include in *Original Sin* the three things—the 'guilt of Adam's first sin,' 'the want of original righteousness,' and the 'corruption of our whole nature.' In the one case it would distinguish two great forms of sin, *original* and *actual*, in the sinfulness of our fallen estate; in the other, it would specify four distinct forms of sin as entering into that sinfulness.

QUESTION 19. *WHAT is the misery of that estate into which man fell?*

*Answer.* All mankind by their fall lost communion with God,<sup>a</sup> are under his wrath and curse,<sup>b</sup> and so made liable to all miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Gen. iii. 8. Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. V. 24. So he drove out the man.

<sup>b</sup> Eph. ii. 3. And were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Gal. iii. 10. Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

<sup>c</sup> Rom. vi. 23. The wages of sin is death.

Matt. xxv. 41. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

---

This Question explains the second of the two things mentioned in Answer 17.

**All mankind by their fall lost communion with God.** The first element in the misery caused by the Fall was a separation between God and Adam; and this separation continues between God and all men, until grace intervenes. God and man ceased to be of one mind, and so real communion or fellowship became



impossible between them. Man learned to dread God rather than to delight in His presence, and God's holiness could have no favour for man's evil. 'Can two walk together except they be agreed?' (Amos iii. 3).

**Are under His wrath.** The wrath of God is spoken of very often, and in the most distinct terms, both in the Old Testament (Psalm lxxviii. 31; xc. 7, 9, 11, &c.), and in the New (Rom. i. 18; ix. 22; Heb. iii. 11; iv. 3). As there is in man a sense of indignation, which is in itself innocent and right, against oppression, injustice, and wrong, so the Bible teaches that there is in God a righteous indignation against sin, and that apart from grace we are under this, or have it on us (John iii. 36.) So Paul speaks of men as being 'by nature the children of wrath' (Eph. ii. 3), that is, *subject to wrath*, or *beneath* it; compare such expressions as 'son of stripes,' rendered 'worthy to be beaten' in Deut. xxv. 2.

**And curse.** 'Curse' means properly the expression of a wish for evil, the calling down of evil upon one, and then that which brings evil on one. Here it has the more specific sense of the condemnation of God, or the sentence of His law; notice how Christ Himself is declared to have been 'made a curse,' or brought under the sentence of God's law, for us, in order to redeem us from the curse (Gal. iii. 13).

**And so made liable to all miseries in this life.** We suffer the ills of life because we are under God's wrath and curse. The inequalities, failures, and sorrows of life, as well as its saddening shortness, are the consequences of that wrath, or the things through which it works. They are so put in Psalm xc.

**To death itself:** this was the evil threatened when man was put to the test, and the evil pronounced in the Divine sentence when he fell (Gen. ii. 17; iii. 19).

**And to the pains, that is, penalties.**

**Of hell for ever.** 'Hell,' a word taken probably from a root signifying *hidden*, and so meaning literally 'the unseen abode.' It was used originally in the sense of 'the place of the dead generally.' Here it means the scene of future retribution, or the abode of the lost. The retribution of sin follows us into the other world. If grace does not help us, we are liable to that retribution not only here and now, but there and for ever. So long as sin endures, its penalties must last. If the sin passes with us into the other world, the penalties must pass too. But the Catechism does not say what these pains or penalties consist in.

**QUESTION 20.** *Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?*

*Answer.* God having, out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life,<sup>a</sup> did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Eph. i. 4. According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world.

<sup>b</sup> Rom. iii. 21. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets; V. 22. Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe.

Having stated the doctrine of man's sin and need, the Catechism turns now to the remedy which the grace of God has provided. It begins by showing where the remedy has its origin and foundation. Here it touches some of the profoundest and most comforting truths of the Bible. Every term deserves close study.

**God having . . . elected.** The doctrine of 'election' is a part of the general doctrine of 'fore-ordination.'

It has been differently explained by different Churches. But it must be accepted in some form. For the idea of an election of God runs through the whole Bible. The words 'elect,' 'election' (which are just the same as 'choose,' 'chosen,' 'choice') are used most usually of the Divine choice of men to salvation (Rom. xi. 5, 28 ; Eph. i. 4 ; 1 Thess. i. 4). The adjective 'elect' is applied to *Israel* (Isaiah xlv. 4), to *angels* (1 Tim. v. 21), to the Messiah (Matt. xii. 18), and to *believers* (Rom. viii. 33), in which last sense it is used here.

**Out of His mere good pleasure.** The word 'mere' means originally *pure* or *unmixed*. The 'good pleasure' represents a word which occurs frequently in Scripture (Ps. li. 18 ; Eph. i. 5, 9 ; Phil. ii. 13). It is one of the most gracious words of the Bible, and is often translated 'favour' in the Old Testament (Ps. lxxxix. 17 ; cvi. 4). It denotes the kingly considerate love of God, His 'good will,' as it is rendered in the angels' song (Luke ii. 14). This clause, therefore, indicates that the Divine election has its origin or cause not in anything in us, but in God's good will—that and that alone, pure and unmixed. His choice is not an *arbitrary* act. He has His reasons for it. But these reasons do not arise from anything outside Himself.

**From all eternity.** The election here intended is not merely the act by which God in time takes some men out of their sinful life and brings them into a holy life, but the act or decision of His own mind before all time. Here is the deep foundation of our election—the eternal purpose of God.

**Elected some.** This implies that the election is not a general election only of nations or communities, but the particular election of individuals. It says nothing, however, of the *number* of the elect, whether small or great. The Bible leaves that untold ; and the Catechism follows it, mindful of the Lord's rebuke of the curious (Luke xiii. 23, 24). The word

'some' means that, while all might justly have been left to the penalty of their sin, God made gracious provision, before the world was formed, that at least not all should be so left.

**To everlasting life**, that is, God had in view not merely that those so chosen should enjoy the means of grace, but that they should be made certain of salvation. His purpose was to make them sure of eternal life, and in order to that His purpose also was that they should have the means of grace and the aids of His Spirit. Their faith and repentance are not the reasons which prompted His election, but the results of the election.

**Did enter into a covenant of grace.** On the word *Covenant*, see Question 12. We read of covenants made between God and individual men, such as Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, as well as between God and Israel. But this 'covenant' is one made by God with Himself; in other words, made between the Persons of the Godhead, or between the Father and the Son in particular. It belongs, therefore, to eternity. It is called a covenant 'of grace,' because it originated in the pure love or good will of God, and because its benefits are bestowed not as a matter of justice or merit, but as a matter of favour, on those who do not deserve them. This gracious covenant, which was formed in eternity, has been carried out in time in two distinct forms, which are called *dispensations* or economies (*i.e.*, modes of administration), viz., the Old Testament economy or the dispensation of the Law, and the New Testament economy or the dispensation of the Gospel.

**To deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and bring them into an estate of salvation.** This states the intention of the covenant. It was to undo the effects of the Fall, and ransom men from the condition of bondage into which they had sank. The word 'salvation' and the word 'redemption' are both terms taken directly from Scripture. The latter



means properly a buying back out of a state of slavery or captivity.

**By a Redeemer.** This explains the *means* by which the object of the Covenant was to be made good. It could only be by One who was capable of doing for fallen men all that a Redeemer does for the bond and enslaved. In the Old Testament Jehovah is known as the Redeemer of Israel (Is. xli. 14; lx. 16). The word is now the consecrated title of Christ, who is said in the New Testament to deliver or redeem us from such things as these—the wrath of God (1 Thes. i. 10), the curse of the law (Gal. iii. 13), the guilt of sin (Eph. i. 7), iniquity (Titus, ii. 14), a vain life (1 Pet. i. 18).

This doctrine of election, which is the Calvinistic doctrine, is opposed to the doctrine that God elects only nations or communities, not individuals; to the doctrine that He elects only to external privilege; and to the doctrine which is called the Arminian, viz., that the foresight of God is the ground of His election, that is to say, that He elects only those to life who He foresees will believe. The doctrine of the Catechism is that God in His eternity elects definite individuals (Eph. i. 4, 5); that He elects these to salvation (2 Thes. ii. 13); and that in this He is prompted not by anything foreseen in us, but by His own sovereign, wise, and loving will (Eph. i. 5, 9, 11).

**QUESTION 21.** *Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?*

**Answer.** The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ,<sup>a</sup> who, being the eternal Son of God, became man,<sup>b</sup> and so was, and con-

<sup>a</sup> 1 Tim. ii. 5. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

<sup>b</sup> John i. 14. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.

tinueth to be, God and man in two distinct natures, and one person,<sup>c</sup> for ever.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>c</sup> Rom. ix. 5. Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

<sup>d</sup> Heb. vii. 24. But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.

We come now to the very heart of the Christian Revelation. A Redeemer is our greatest want, and we are not left without one. As the previous Question tells us that a Redeemer has been eternally provided, this one explains who that Redeemer is.

The only Redeemer of God's elect—a memorable sentence in most Scriptural terms. The word *only* is attached to *Redeemer* here, to indicate that no other being is capable of doing this great service, or of sharing in any way in it. This is in opposition to such doctrines as those of the Church of Rome on the intercession of Mary and the Saints, which recognise other mediators and redeemers in a secondary degree. *Elect*: This majestic word is used by Scripture itself as a general title for the people of God (Rom. viii. 33; Col. iii. 12, &c.). It is indeed one of the words which we have from Christ's own lips (Matt. xxiv. 22, 24, 31; Luke xviii. 7, &c.).

Is the Lord Jesus Christ: 'Jesus' is the personal name. Its meaning is explained in Matt. i. 21. In two passages (Acts vii. 45; Heb. iv. 5), it stands for *Joshua*, the names being similar in sense. 'Christ' is properly the official name, the same as *Messiah*, meaning Anointed One—the One *Anointed* by God to the office of Redeemer. The title, 'the Lord,' expresses His dignity and rights. He is Master or Lord in two senses: first, in virtue of what He is in His own nature, and as Maker of all; secondly, in virtue of what He has done, and as Redeemer. There are few things more largely set forth in the New Testament than the lordship, which He has won by what He did and suffered on earth. (See,

among many others, such passages as Acts ii. 36 ; x. 36 ; Rom. xiv. 9 ; Phil. ii. 11).

**Who, being the eternal Son of God :** The Divinity of the Redeemer is placed first ; and it is a true Divinity—one of nature. This is expressed by the two terms, 'Eternal' and 'Son of God.' His Sonship did not begin at any point in time. It is not a relation which became His only when He entered our world, nor one to which He was only elevated at last on account of His perfect obedience. The New Testament teaches clearly that He existed before all time, and that in His eternal existence with God He occupied the relation of Son to Father. He Himself speaks of an existence and a glory which He had with the Father before He came to earth, and even before the world was (John vi. 62 ; xvi. 28 ; xvii. 5). The title, 'Son of God,' is sometimes used simply as another name for the Messiah, and it is applied to believers who are made sons of God only by being adopted. But Christ is 'the Son of God,' in a sense that holds good of no other, and on His own lips this great name expresses His claim to a Divine nature. The sentence means, therefore, that Christ is the Son of God not merely because He is like God in character, but because He is of one nature and life with Him.

**Became man.**—This expresses His *incarnation*—a term which means the 'act of assuming flesh,' or the 'entering into flesh.' It is taken from the great declaration made in John i. 14—'the Word was made flesh.'

**And so was, and continueth to be, God and Man.**—Such was the result of the incarnation. The 'eternal Son of God,' all through His life on earth was at once God and man, and in heaven He still continues to be both God and man. He did not cease to be God when He became man, and He has not ceased to be man now, but has carried His humanity with Him.

In two distinct natures and one person for ever. — Two natures, the Divine and the human, each with its own properties, meet in the Redeemer. Yet the one is not merged in the other. And though the Divine nature remains entirely Divine, and the human nature continues entirely human, there are not two persons. The two natures are united in a single Person or Self, and this distinction of natures with unity of person abides *for ever*. The terms only feebly express what manner of being the Redeemer has. But they indicate that His personality is entirely different from any other. We can only say that He is the *God-Man*, or that His person is *Divine-human*.

Let it be carefully noticed that the first thing in His personality is the Divinity. He is a Divine person, and it is because He is so that His work effects what it does.

QUESTION 22. *How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?*

*Answer.* Christ, the Son of God, became man, by taking to himself a true body,<sup>a</sup> and a reasonable soul,<sup>b</sup> being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and born of her,<sup>c</sup> yet without sin.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Heb. ii. 14. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same.

<sup>b</sup> Matt. xxvi. 38. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.

<sup>c</sup> Luke i. 31. Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. V. 35. The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee.

<sup>d</sup> Heb. vii. 26. Such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.

---

It is impossible for us to understand how the incarnation of the eternal Son of God took place. But



so far as the Bible gives any light on what it implied, this Question sets it forth.

Christ, the Son of God, became man, by taking to himself a true body.—His incarnation was His own free act—‘a taking to Himself’ of something which He had not before, although He existed before. Becoming man implied taking man’s body, for bodily existence belongs to man. And this was ‘a true body,’ one of actual flesh and bones like ours. One of the earliest heresies taught that matter was in itself so evil, that the Holy Son of God could not possibly have connected Himself with it, and, therefore, that the body which He took was not a real material body, but only an apparent body, one in semblance. This would make His bodily weariness and pain unreal. But the New Testament everywhere shows Christ to have had a body which could be touched and handled, and was capable of growing (Luke ii. 40) and suffering, just like ours. Even after His resurrection He said to His disciples—‘Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I myself: handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have’ (Luke xxiv. 39).

And a reasonable soul: another of the early heresies denied that the Redeemer had the reasoning soul which we have. It admitted that He had a body like ours, and also a soul, in the lower sense of the animal soul or principle of physical life. But it affirmed that the divinity or the Holy Spirit took the place in Christ of the reasonable soul in us. Were this the case He would not have been man in any proper sense of the term. But the New Testament shows Him to have had a soul or spirit essentially like ours, increasing in wisdom (Luke ii. 52), having such feelings of sorrow (Matt. xxvi. 38), anger (Mark iii. 5), joy (Luke x. 21), etc., as we have.

Being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the Womb of the Virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin : His humanity was a *true* humanity, because He was born of a true, human mother. It was a *perfect* humanity, because it was fashioned for Him by the Holy Ghost. The Virgin Mary is nowhere presented in scripture as sinless, or as to be worshipped in the way encouraged by the Roman Catholic Church. If Christ was born of Mary, 'yet without sin,' it was not because Mary's womanhood was different from that of other women, but because the Holy Ghost sanctified His humanity.

The Redeemer of God's elect, therefore, is as fully and really the Son of man as He is the Son of God. Of all titles this one, the Son of man, was the one oftenest used by Himself.

QUESTION 23. *WHAT offices doth Christ execute as our Redeemer ?*

*Answer.* Christ, as our Redeemer, executeth the offices of a prophet,<sup>a</sup> of a priest,<sup>b</sup> and of a king,<sup>c</sup> both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation.

<sup>a</sup> Acts iii. 22. Moses truly said unto the fathers, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me ; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.

<sup>b</sup> Heb. v. 6. Thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec.

<sup>c</sup> Ps. ii. 6. Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion.

---

From the *Person* of Christ we pass next to the *Work* of Christ. They come properly in this order. For the value of the Work depends upon the dignity of the Person. The Work of Christ may be spoken of as Redemption, Salvation, Reconciliation, or Mediation. But it contains so much that various terms are required in order to exhibit what it is. This

question describes it in the language of three *offices* and two *states*. This method of explaining Christ's Work, though not universally adopted, is an old and convenient one.

Christ, as our Redeemer, executeth the offices of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king : By an 'office' we mean a position held and a service rendered by one for others. It is not to be supposed that these *offices* came one after the other. The Redeemer is not at one time Prophet, at another Priest, and at a third King. All along He is all three at once.

Both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation. This mention of two distinct estates or conditions, called by these particular names, rests on the general view which the New Testament gives of Christ's position on earth and in heaven, and especially on the great passage in Phil. ii. 6-8, where it is said of Him who was 'in the form of God,' that 'being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself,' and that 'God also hath highly exalted him.' It is affirmed here that the three offices, as they are executed together, belong also to both estates. It is not, *e.g.*, that He was a Prophet or a Priest only in His earthly life, or that He is a King only in His heavenly life ; but on earth He did at once the things which belong to a Prophet, those which belong to a Priest, and those which belong to a King, and He continues to do the same things still. It is not meant, however, that all three offices were, or are, discharged precisely in the same way at the same time, or in both estates. We shall see, for example, that one part of His priestly work was done on earth, which is not repeated now in heaven.

QUESTION 24. *How doth Christ execute the office of a prophet ?*

*Answer.* Christ executeth the office of a pro-

phet, in revealing to us,<sup>a</sup> by His word<sup>b</sup> and Spirit,<sup>c</sup> the will of God for our salvation.

<sup>a</sup> John i. 18. No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

<sup>b</sup> John xx. 31. These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: and that believing ye might have life through his name.

<sup>c</sup> John xiv. 26. The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things.

---

**Christ executeth the office of a prophet.** We have good reason from Scripture for speaking of Christ as a Prophet. The Apostles declare Him to be the Prophet in whom the promise given by Moses (in Deut. xviii. 15, 18) was fulfilled. See, *e.g.*, Peter's discourse in Acts iii. 22-24. He took the title also to Himself, at least indirectly, as in Matt. xiii. 57; Luke xiii. 33. In the Old Testament the 'prophet' occupies a large and important place. He is not merely one who predicts future events. He speaks for God to men, brings out the spiritual power of the Divine Law, preaches righteousness to his generation and declares God's mind. The New Testament teaches us that this idea of a prophet was at last perfectly made good in Christ. The Answer shows how this is the case.

**In revealing to us, by His word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation.** To 'reveal' is to unveil or make clear. Christ does the work of a prophet, in so far as He declares to us what we do not know, or sheds light upon what is not clear to us. In doing this He uses two great means—His Word and His Spirit. These are the best of all means. Christ's word is God's word. God spoke aforetime in various ways to men, especially through His prophets. But He has spoken finally and completely through His Son (Heb. i. 1). Christ's Spirit, also, is the Spirit of God, whom He promised to send (John xv. 26). The voice of this Spirit is in the written Word. What is



thus revealed is 'the will of God,' not merely what He is in Himself, but what His mind is toward us. And this will is revealed 'for our salvation,' not with the view of furnishing us with what our own faculties can reach, but with the sovereign purpose of bringing us back to Himself.

QUESTION 25. *How doth Christ execute the office of a priest ?*

Answer. Christ executeth the office of a priest, in His once offering up of Himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice,<sup>a</sup> and reconcile us to God ;<sup>b</sup> and in making continual intercession for us.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Heb. ix. 28. Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.

<sup>b</sup> Heb. ii. 17. In all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

<sup>c</sup> Heb. vii. 25. He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

It is the priestly office that leads us to the very heart of Christ's work. He does not, indeed, expressly call Himself a *priest*, but He speaks of Himself in terms which suggest it, as in Matt. xx. 28. In the Epistles, too, His work is described in the language of priestly acts and offerings (1 Cor. v. 7, 1 John ii. 2). Above all, the *Epistle to the Hebrews* sets him forth at length as our High Priest, and shows that in Him was perfectly realised all that was shadowed forth in the priests of the Old Testament.

Christ executeth the office of a Priest : 'The word 'priest' is believed to be a shorter form of 'presbyter,' which means primarily an *elder*. 'Priest,' however, has the special sense of a minister of religion. The general idea of a priest is, that of one who draws near to God on behalf of others. The

'priest' occupied a central place in the Mosaic Law. Through him the people approached God; and Christ is our Priest in this general sense of being the Minister or Mediator through whom we draw near to God.

**In His once offering up of Himself a sacrifice:** There are two things in His priesthood which are of such vital importance that they are specially dealt with, namely, the great functions of *sacrifice* and *intercession*. The word 'sacrifice' comes from two Latin terms, meaning *to make sacred*, and it describes something which is made sacred by being offered to God. What Christ offered was His own life, or, as it is also expressed both here and in the New Testament (Eph. v. 2), *Himself*. This sacrifice was His own voluntary act—it was *His* 'offering.' It had also such peerless value, that unlike the Mosaic sacrifices which had to be constantly repeated, it required only to be offered *once* (Heb. x. 10, 14, &c.).

The virtue of this offering is still more particularly set forth. Two things it was designed to do, and these two things it effectually does. The one is **to satisfy divine justice**. This is legal language, and it expresses how Christ's sacrifice stands to law. Sin, as was stated in Question 14, is an offence to the law of God. The claim of this law must be met, else God would not be true to justice in forgiving sin. It is met by Christ's sacrifice, because He not only perfectly kept God's law in His own obedient life, but in His death bore the penalty attached to the breaking of the law. So He is said to 'satisfy' (a word meaning literally *to make or do enough*) divine justice; and His work is called a *Satisfaction*, because it does enough to meet all legal claims which stand out against us, and to make it as just as well as a gracious thing for God to forgive sin.

The other object and effect of Christ's sacrifice is **to reconcile us to God**: to 'reconcile' is to bring two

persons together again who have been estranged. There is estrangement between us and God, and it is caused by two things—by unworthy feelings in us toward God, and by a holiness and a justice in Him which separate Him from what is unrighteous and evil. Christ's sacrifice removes these causes of estrangement. It honours God's holiness and justice by meeting the claims of His law, and it wakens in us the new feelings of thankfulness, love, trust and obedience. So it effects a reconciliation between us and God. Hence it is called the *Atonement*—a word essentially the same as *reconciliation*, and meaning literally, that which *sets at one* (see Rom. v. 11, 2 Cor. v. 19).

**And in making continual intercession for us:** this is the second of the two great ministries in His priesthood. And the second is dependent on the first. It is on the ground of the sacrifice that He intercedes. 'To intercede' means properly to *come between*, and it is specially applied to coming between two persons in the way of prayer addressed to the one for the other. This part of Christ's priestly work differs from the other in more than one respect. His sacrifice was done once for all; but His intercession is carried on continually. His sacrifice belonged to His earthly ministry only, but His intercession belongs also to His heavenly ministry. He prayed for us when He was on earth, and of this the xvii<sup>th</sup>. chapter of John is the most memorable example. He prays for us now in heaven, where he needs not, however, to use the words He used on earth. It is enough for Him now "to *appear* in the presence of God for us" (Heb. ix. 24). On His intercession see also such passages as Rom. viii. 34; 1 John ii. 2; in which last notice especially the title *Advocate*.

QUESTION 26. *How doth Christ execute the office of a king?*

*Answer.* Christ executeth the office of a king, in subduing us to Himself,<sup>a</sup> in ruling and defending us,<sup>b</sup> and in restraining and conquering all His and our enemies.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Ps. cx. 3. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.

<sup>b</sup> Isa. xxxiii. 22. The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; he will save us.

<sup>c</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 25. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet.

---

Christ claimed to be a King. He accepted the title when it was used of Him by others, as by Nathanael (John i. 49), by the people at Jerusalem (John xii. 13), and by Pilate (Luke xxiii. 3, 4). The name *Christ* or *Messiah* is itself a kingly name. It denotes most distinctively the descendant of David's royal house of whom the Old Testament prophesied, and with whom the hopes of Israel were bound up. See such Psalms as ii., xlv., lxxii., cx. It is as King that the Messiah appears in some of the greatest utterances of the Prophets; see, *e.g.*, Isaiah viii. 6, 7, Dan. vii. 13, 14, &c.

**Christ executeth the office of a King in subduing us to Himself:** this implies that by nature we are, as Paul expresses it, 'enemies' to God (Col. i. 21), and disloyal to Christ. If we are made the friends of God and the willing subjects of His Son, it is by conquest. It is by Christ who is 'the power of God' (1 Cor. i. 24), and 'able even to subdue all things to Himself' (Phil. iii. 21), winning us by His grace.

**In ruling and defending us:** Christ has given us a law for our life. He came not to destroy, but to fulfil the law of God (Matt. v. 17). In the sermon on the mount (Matt. v.-vii.) He has set that law before us, in all its spiritual power and beauty. He has summed it up also in the two great precepts of love to God and love to our neighbour (Matt. xxii. 37-40); and He makes the keeping of this commandment



the test of our love to Him (John xiv. 15). But He does the King's part not only in giving laws for the direction of our life, but in 'defending' us—providing for our safety by His royal resources. He declares of those who follow Him 'they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand' (John x. 28).

And in restraining and conquering all His and our enemies. He reckons our enemies His own, and He limits their power so that they reach us not, or breaks it so that they are beaten in their assaults. These enemies are many. But the chief of them are *Satan*, of whom it is said 'For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil' (1 John iii. 8); *the world*, of which He said to His disciples, 'be of good cheer, I have overcome the world' (John xvi. 33); and *death*, the last enemy, which also is destined to be destroyed (1 Cor. xv. 26).

As Redeemer He has a special Kingship, which is the reward of His obedience, and the result of His redeeming work (Phil. ii. 9-11, Heb. xii. 2). This is His *mediatorial* kingdom or sovereignty. Its great object is His Church. But it extends to all things and makes them serve the interests of His Church. So it is said that 'God hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the Church' (Eph. i. 22).

QUESTION 27. *WHEREIN did Christ's humiliation consist?*

*Answer.* Christ's humiliation consisted in His being born, and that in a low condition,<sup>a</sup> made under the law,<sup>b</sup> undergoing the miseries of this

<sup>a</sup> Luke ii. 7. And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger.

<sup>b</sup> Gal. iv. 4. God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.

life,<sup>c</sup> the wrath of God,<sup>d</sup> and the cursed death of the cross;<sup>e</sup> in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>c</sup> Isa. liii. 3. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.

<sup>d</sup> Mat. xxvii. 46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, My God! My God! why hast thou forsaken me?

<sup>e</sup> Phil. ii. 8. He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

<sup>f</sup> Mat. xii. 40. As Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

---

The offices having been expounded, the two estates in which they are exercised are next explained. The one is spoken of in the past tense, 'consisted,' because it belonged to one definite period; the other in the present tense, 'consisteth,' because, while it began at a particular time and with a particular event, it continues without end.

**Christ's humiliation.** The word 'humiliation' goes back to the Latin word for the *ground*, and means the act of being made low as the ground, or the condition resulting from that. It implies, therefore, a higher estate in which He subsisted before. Scripture teaches us that this was a Divine estate. It expresses it in various ways, *e.g.*, as a being 'with God' (John i. 1); as a 'glory' not belonging to time (John xvii. 5); as a rich estate (2 Cor. viii. 9); as 'the form of God,' that is, the condition of existence proper to God, or as a state of 'equality' with God. The last two expressions occur together in Phil. ii. 6-11, which should be carefully studied as the most important passage on the estates of Christ in all Paul's epistles.

**Consisted in His being born.** Scripture speaks of His humiliation as an *emptying* of Himself; for the phrase translated in Phil. ii. 7, 'made Himself of no reputation,' means literally '*emptied* Himself.' But we are not told *how* this took place, and it is im-

possible for us to understand all that it implied. The Catechism contents itself, therefore, with simply noticing the several stages which Scripture itself indicates in this humiliation. The first is His birth of an earthly mother. And than this first stage in His humiliation none was greater. Who can conceive the depth of the descent involved in the Eternal One stooping to the limits of our temporal life, and entering it as we do?

**And that in a low condition :** not only did He thus come down to the rank and measure of our life, but He entered it in such circumstances as are known only to the humblest of our race. How *low* the condition was, let the mention of the 'manger' and the fact that 'there was no room for them in the inn' (Luke ii. 7) bear witness. And such lowness of condition continued with Him so long as He was on earth.

**Made under the law :** being born of a woman He became a true man, and as such He came under the moral law to which all men are subject. Being born of a Jewish woman, He became a true Israelite, and as such He came under the law of Moses. So we see Him in the Gospel records always honouring the Divine law. Even when he appears to take liberties with the ceremonial law of Moses, as in the case of the Sabbath, it is not with the law itself, but with the traditions with which men had burdened it. His loyalty to the law was so perfect that He could challenge even His bitterest enemies to convict Him of sin (John viii. 46).

**Undergoing the miseries of this life :** as a true man, living in a fallen world, He shared the ordinary burdens and evils of our life—its toils, its privations, its temptations, its sorrows, its weariness, the pains which come upon body and upon soul, the grief caused by the enmity of men, the tyranny of power, the faithlessness and desertion of friends.

**The wrath of God :** this is seen, as Psalm xc. ex-

presses it, in the ills of life, the shortness of man's time, the doom of mortality. So far as Christ knew these things, He underwent the 'wrath of God.' He had experience of it, too, in a deeper way still—in the sense He had of the evil of man's sin, the burden which He felt it to be upon His soul, the relation in which He placed Himself to it by undertaking to bear its penalty. The trouble which came upon His soul on the arrival of the Greeks at the feast (John xii. 27), the agony in the garden (Matt. xxvi. 36-44), the cry of desertion from the cross (Matt. xxvii. 46) indicate a sense of what the holy wrath of God against sin is, and of what it is for a sinless nature to bear sin's penalties, which it is impossible for us to fathom.

**And the cursed death of the Cross :** righteous though He was, He endured the lot of sinful man even to the extent of submission to death, the doom decreed against sin. And death in His case was no easy or honoured decease, but that of a malefactor, the kind of death to which the Mosaic law attached a curse (Gal. iii. 13).

**In being buried and continuing under the power of death for a time :** this brings out how completely He fulfilled man's lot, not only tasting the death which is abhorrent to human nature, but subjecting Himself to the degradation of the grave, and to the experiences of the disembodied state. His being buried proved the reality of His death, and so it is mentioned by Paul in 1 Cor. xv. 4. But we are not told what took place with Him in the mysterious interval before He rose again, when death held Him under its power. Scripture seldom touches on this, but leads us at once from His death to His glorious resurrection.

QUESTION 28. *WHEREIN consisteth Christ's exaltation ?*



*Answer.* Christ's exaltation consisteth in his rising again from the dead on the third day,<sup>a</sup> in ascending up into heaven, in sitting at the right of God the Father,<sup>b</sup> and in coming to judge the world at the last day.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 4. And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.

<sup>b</sup> Mark xvi. 19. So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

<sup>c</sup> Acts xvii. 31. He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

---

**Christ's exaltation :** the word 'exaltation' means the act of raising high, or the state which results from that. The 'exaltation' is represented as the reward of His obedience or mediatorial work. The New Testament speaks in express terms of Christ as being 'exalted' (Acts ii. 33); and of His 'exaltation' as an honour bestowed by God (see Acts v. 31, and especially Phil. ii. 9).

**consisteth in His rising again from the dead :** Four things are named as entering into His exaltation. The first is His resurrection; which event formed a central subject of the preaching of the Apostles (Acts iv. 2, 33), and is represented by the New Testament as having the forgiveness of sin, the future life of believers, and all that is most vital in the Gospel, dependent on it (1 Cor. xv. 12-19). The Gospels and the Apostle Paul (1 Cor. xv. 5-8) enumerate the witnesses by whose testimony the fact that He rose is surely established.

**On the third day :** He was crucified on one day (a Friday), remained in death throughout a second day (the Saturday), and rose on the morning of the next day—the first Lord's Day.

**In ascending up into heaven :** He tarried for some forty days in His risen state, showing Himself occasionally to His disciples, and instructing them in

the things of His Kingdom. Then he returned to heaven. The word 'heaven' is supposed to be connected with the word 'heave,' and is used for the *firmament* or *sky*, but more particularly for the dwelling-place of God, the region into which Christ passed from earth, the scene of the future blessedness of the righteous. But *where* it is, or *what* it is, we can at the best but poorly conceive. We have three historical reports of the Ascension, in Mark xvi. 19-20, Luke xxiv. 50-53, Acts i. 9-11. These show that it took place visibly. It is also referred to in other parts of the New Testament (*e.g.* Eph. i. 20, 1 Tim. iii. 16, 1 Pet. iii. 22). It is a leading subject in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where Christ is spoken of as 'passed into the heavens' (iv. 14), as 'the forerunner' who is for us entered 'within the veil' (vi. 19, 20), &c.

**In sitting at the right hand of God the Father:** The 'right hand' is the place of honour and power. The sentence states the Session of Christ, implying that He now shares the Father's glory, and possesses unlimited dominion. It is an entirely Biblical expression, and is taken from the custom of Eastern kings, of which we have an instance in 1 Kings ii. 19. It takes us back to one of the grandest Messianic Psalms, the 110th. It is used by Christ of Himself (Matt. xxvi. 64), and is often on the lips of the New Testament writers (Mark xvi. 19, Col. iii. 1, Heb. i. 3, 1 Pet. iii. 22, &c.).

**And in coming to judge the world at the last day:** The New Testament teaches that Christ is to return. It is full of the hope of that return. Christ represents Himself as coming 'in His own glory' (Matt. xxv. 31), 'in the clouds of heaven' (Matt. xxvi. 64), 'in the glory of His Father,' and accompanied by 'His angels' (Matt. xvi. 27). It has a place in several of His parables. The New Testament writers all speak of it. Hence the doctrine of the *Second Advent*, that is, that there is to be a definite Return of the

Redeemer in open majesty and glory. This is to be at 'the last day,' and will mark the end of the present dispensation. But it is not revealed to us *when* that day is to come (Matt. xxiv. 36). Its object is to be *judgment*. The doctrine of a Divine judgment of men meets us in the Old Testament (Ps. xcvi. 9; Isa. lxvi. 15, &c.) But it is proclaimed in its completeness only in the New Testament. Here we are taught that the whole world is to be judged, small and great, righteous and unrighteous, quick and dead (Matt. xxv. 32; Rev. xx. 12; 2 Pet. ii. 9; that the general judgment is to be according to men's works (Matt. xvi. 27), and according to the various measures of light and opportunity enjoyed (Rom. ii. 12-16; John xii. 48); that it is to take place at Christ's Advent, and is to be in Christ's own hand (Acts x. 42; 2 Tim. iv. 1; Rev. xxii. 12). This last fact, viz., that men are to be judged not by the absolute God, but by One who is a partaker of their humanity, is one of the utmost graciousness as well as importance. It is taught very distinctly in the New Testament. The judgment-seat is declared to be that 'of Christ' (2 Cor. v. 10), and the Judge is declared to be the *Son of Man* (Matt. xvi. 27; xxiv. 30, 31; John v. 27).

QUESTION 29. *How are we made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ?*

*Answer.* We are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, by the effectual application of it to us<sup>a</sup> by his Holy Spirit.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> John i. 12. As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.

<sup>b</sup> Titus iii. 5. Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; V. 6. Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

---

We now reach the doctrine of the Spirit.



This doctrine appears in fragmentary form in the historic books of the Old Testament, *e.g.*, in Gen. i. 2; Exod. xxxi. 3; Judges xv. 14; 2 Sam. xxiii. 2; and oftener in the Psalms and Prophets, *e.g.*, Ps. li. 11; cxxxix. 7; cxliii. 10; Isa. xi. 2; lxiii. 10, 11. But it is only in the New Testament that it is unfolded fully and clearly. There we gather that the Holy Ghost is a distinct Divine Person. As such He is associated with the Father and the Son in Christ's last Commission (Matt. xxviii. 19), in the benediction (2 Cor. xiii. 14), and in such passages as 1 Pet. i. 2; Jude 20, 21. The Catechism has already spoken of the Holy Spirit as one of the Persons of the Trinity. It now gives the doctrine of His Work.

We are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ: 'made partakers,' that is, made to have a part in it. The word 'redemption' means literally a 'buying back.' The term 'purchased' is therefore applied to that of which we are partakers. It is a Scriptural expression (see Acts xx. 28; Eph. i. 14, &c.). The price itself, or the ransom, is His blood or His life.

By the effectual application of it to us: 'effectual' means *producing an effect*, and 'application' means the act of 'putting to.' The 'effectual application of it to us,' therefore, is the bringing it home to us and making it work its proper work in us.

By His Holy Spirit. Our understanding of things spiritual, and our affection for them, are so far astray that naturally we suffer this redemption to remain at a distance from us. We need the grace of God to exhibit it to us as it really is, and to bring us under its power and into its benefits. That grace is communicated to us by the Spirit; His most constant title is the '*Holy Spirit*,' for He is the source of all holiness in us. He is called the Spirit of God, but also the Spirit of Christ. For the New Testament teaches us that the full gift of the Holy Ghost comes



from the Risen Saviour (John vii. 39, xvi. 7; Acts ii. 33).

There is an important distinction, therefore, between the work of Christ and the work of the Spirit. The former is accomplished outside of us, and deals with the claims of the law and the wrath of God. The latter is accomplished within us, and deals with the removal of all that in our hearts which is opposed to God and the things of God. So we speak of Christ's work as that of *impetration*, that is, the meritorious acquisition of redemption; and of the Spirit's work as that of *application*, or bringing what Christ has secured home to us.

QUESTION 30. *How doth the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?*

*Answer.* The Spirit applieth to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by working faith in us,<sup>a</sup> and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Eph. ii. 8. By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.

<sup>b</sup> Eph. iii. 17. That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, &c.

1 Cor. i. 9. God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ.

It concerns us to understand how the Spirit works in this vital matter. The Catechism, therefore, gives us a further explanation of the way in which the redemption and the sinner are brought together.

The Spirit applieth to us the redemption purchased by Christ by working faith in us. This then is the secret of the 'application'—it is by persuading us to believe and trust God. The *nature* of this faith is afterwards stated in all its breadth (Question 86). Here it is enough to say that it implies belief in what God holds forth Christ to be, and committing ourselves in trust to Christ Himself as Saviour.

Scripture declares of God that 'without faith it is impossible to *please him*' (Heb. xi. 6). It also teaches that true faith is so foreign to us naturally that only God's own Spirit can create it in us (1 Cor. xii. 9, Heb. xii. 2).

And thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling. The great thing that faith does for us is to *unite* us to Christ, or make us one with Him. And this in two ways. We are made one with Him *federally*, that is to say, one with Him to all *Covenant* effects, so that what He gains when acting for us is made over to us. And we are made one with Him *vitally*, in the sense that through His Spirit we receive a new life and power from Him. The words 'in our effectual calling' indicate that all this takes place only as God Himself calls us, and that in a way which surely effects His gracious purpose with us.

### QUESTION 31. *WHAT is effectual calling?*

*Answer.* Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit,<sup>a</sup> whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery,<sup>b</sup> enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ,<sup>c</sup> and renewing our wills,<sup>d</sup> he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the Gospel.<sup>e</sup>

*a* 2 Tim. i. 9. Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling.

*b* Acts ii. 37. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

*c* Acts xxvi. 18. To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.

*d* Ezek. xxxvi. 26. I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

*e* John vi. 44. No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me draw him. V. 45. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

---

The previous Answer stated shortly how we

obtain a personal interest in the redeeming work of our Head. It is by believing and being united with Him. But this, it was added, is 'in our effectual calling.' Whether the terms of peace with God which He has secured for us are to be of real good to us, turns on the terms on which we stand to Himself. But it is only an operation of Divine grace that can bring us into right terms with Christ. That operation is named 'effectual calling,' and it is explained here with great care. This Answer is of the highest importance for the view it gives us at once of the Spirit's work, and of what is meant by a saving change in ourselves.

**Effectual calling.** The term 'effectual' represents a Greek word which means 'energetic,' 'energising.' That is the word which Paul uses in such phrases as, 'according to the power which *worketh* in us,' or *energises* in us (Eph. iii. 20); 'effectual calling,' therefore, means a calling which produces the intended effect, one which comes with power and success. The word 'call,' or 'calling,' also meets us often in Scripture in the peculiar and solemn sense of a Divine call. This idea of a call of God runs through the Bible as a whole. It is expressed in two ways, of which we have instances in our Lord's declaration, 'Many be called, but few chosen' (Matt. xx. 16); and in Paul's statement, 'whom he did predestinate them he also called' (Rom. viii. 30). So we distinguish between two calls of God—an *external* and an *internal*. The former is in view in our Lord's declaration, and means the invitation addressed by God through His Word to sinful men—a call which may or may not be obeyed. The latter is the one meant in Paul's statement, and expresses the call of God which comes through His Spirit, and appeals with power and success to the soul. This is the calling which is meant here.

**Is the work of God's Spirit.** It is a *work*, not an *act*, because it has stages which can be distinguished



and implies more than one change. In all its parts it is referred by Scripture to the Third Person of the Trinity. It is the peculiar office of the Spirit in this way to give effect in time to the electing love of God, which is of eternity. And it is because it is the Spirit's direct operation that the 'calling' is 'effectual,' and cannot fail of its result.

**Whereby convincing us of our sin and misery.** The several stages are now described. The first named is *conviction*—the *conviction of sin, and consequently, of misery*. To 'convince' means literally to *conquer*—to win over the mind by subduing its natural ideas of things. Our natural view of sin is a wrong one, and we are brought over to a right view of it only by the powerful operation of God's own Spirit upon our mind. It is the first work of that Spirit to bring us to the bar of conscience and the Divine Law, and make us see sin as it really is. So when Christ promised the Comforter, He declared that His great function would be to produce conviction, and mentioned sin as the first of three things of which the world had to be convinced. See John xvi. 8.

**Enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ.**—the stage of spiritual illumination. Naturally we are so far from seeing the things of God in their true colours that Scripture speaks of us as 'blind' (2 Pet. i. 9). Hence Paul declares that 'the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned' (1 Cor. ii. 14). So we are described as requiring the 'eyes of our understanding' to be 'enlightened' (Eph. i. 18). The Spirit is the Divine Teacher, who makes spiritual truth clear to us. He removes ignorance and prejudice from our minds, and reveals Christ to us so that we see Him as He is, and understand that in Him God has provided all that is needed to meet our sin and misery.

**And renewing our wills.** If we can speak of degrees



here at all, we may speak of this stage as the most difficult of the three. For the *will* is the ruling thing, and to have it misdirected is to have the man himself depraved. But the will has been so affected by the Fall that its bias now is to evil. So we speak of the *bondage* of the will. It is the Spirit of God alone that can bring us out of this, and incline our will once more to God, and give it freedom and ability to do His will.

He doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ. The object of the Spirit's work in all its parts is to bring us to Christ. He does this in a way suitable to our moral nature. He does not exercise any force upon us, but He *persuades* us, that is to say, He presents Christ in such a way to our understanding and affections that we are led to recognise Him to be the Redeemer whom we should choose. And He at the same time *enables* us to embrace Him, that is, He makes it possible for us to break the bonds of prejudice and sin, and act upon the new views of Christ which we now have.

Freely offered to us in the Gospel. This dear and familiar word 'gospel' comes from two old Saxon words, *gôd* and *spell*, and means either 'the good story,' or 'the story of God.' The great message which the Divine story brings to us is the offer of Christ. And the adverb 'freely' indicates that, if we are once led by God's Spirit to desire Him, there is nothing that can stand between Him and us.

The several stages in the call are not necessarily separated by any length of time. They are to be understood simply as things capable of being distinguished from each other. They are all necessarily involved in our calling, in so far as the Fall has equally affected our *understanding*, our *affections*, and our *will*.

QUESTION 32. *WHAT benefits do they that are effectually called partake of in this life?*

*Answer.* They that are effectually called do in this life partake of justification,<sup>a</sup> adoption,<sup>b</sup> and sanctification, and the several benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from them.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Rom. viii. 30. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

<sup>b</sup> Eph. i. 5. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself.

<sup>c</sup> 1 Cor. i. 30. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.

---

The work of God's spirit in our effectual calling is a great work, and it brings great benefits with it. The call is founded on the eternal, electing love of God, and the benefits which it secures are worthy of that love. This Question mentions some of them and refers to others.

They that are effectually called do in this life partake of justification, adoption, and sanctification. Three different kinds of benefits come to the believer, viz: those which he receives in this life, those which he receives at death, and those which he receives at the resurrection. The latter two are dealt with each in a single Question (37 and 38). The consideration of the first extends from Question 33 to Question 36. These seven Questions (32-38) form thus a section by themselves. In the present Answer the three primary benefits are named which belong to this life. But each of these is of such importance that it is specially explained in a separate Question.

And the several benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from them. The primary benefits of justification, adoption, and sanctification, are not only great and unmerited blessings in themselves, but bring others with them. These, too, are deeply connected with the comfort and security of our Christian life, and are stated in their Scriptural character in Question 36.

### QUESTION 33. *WHAT is justification?*

*Answer.* Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins,<sup>a</sup> and accepteth us as righteous in his sight,<sup>b</sup> only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us,<sup>c</sup> and received by faith alone.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Eph. i. 7. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.

<sup>b</sup> 2 Cor. v. 21. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

<sup>c</sup> Rom. v. 19. As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

<sup>d</sup> Gal. ii. 16. Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ.

---

This Question expresses the very life of our Protestant doctrine. It is a monument of the great struggle for the Reformation of religion in Europe. It shows what the Reformers, Knox in our land as well as Luther and others on the Continent, held to be most vital to the Christian faith. It brings out as no other Question does where and how Protestantism differs from Roman Catholicism. It deserves, therefore, the most careful study.

**Justification is an act of God's free grace.** The term 'justification' is a Biblical term, occurring in Rom. iv. 25; v. 16, 18. It may mean either the *state* of being justified, or the *act* of justifying. It has the latter sense in our Question. The verb 'justify' is found very often in the Bible, and much depends on a correct understanding of it. Two senses are possible, which are called the *moral* sense and the *legal* or *forensic*. That is to say, it may mean either to *make* one just inwardly, in respect of moral character, or to *declare* one just outwardly, in the sight of the law. The latter is its usual sense in Scripture, and when it refers to the case of the sinner, it means to reckon him righteous or absolve him from the claims of the



law against him. So it is used as a contrast to *accusing* or *condemning* (Rom. viii. 33, 34). In our Question it has the legal sense of declaring us just, dealing with us as free from guilt or legal liability. It is referred, therefore, to *God*, because it expresses the Divine judgment or sentence. It is *His act*, because it is a single judgment pronounced once for all. It is the act of *His free grace*, because it is pronounced not on the ground of any merit on our side, or any claim which we have in ourselves, but at the prompting of His own love, on the ground of His favour. But, although a free act, it is not an arbitrary act, or a judgment pronounced in mere leniency or good nature. For, as the Answer shows, there is a just and reasonable ground on which it proceeds.

**Wherein He pardoneth all our sins.** To 'pardon' is to remit penalty. The first thing in our justification, is that God releases us from the sentence of His law. And this extends to '*all our sins*,' both original and actual. Those whom God has justified may yet fall into sin, and for their sin they will be chastened by God. But He deals with them then as a Father, not merely as a Judge who uses the law against them and judicially punishes them. This pardon of sin is the gracious burden of the Bible, and is expressed in a variety of ways, *e.g.*, as forgiveness, the covering of sin, remission of sin, not imputing sin, &c. (See such great texts as Eph. i. 7; Psalm xxxii. 1, 2; Matt. xxvi. 28.)

**And accepteth us as righteous in His sight.** Pardon is the first thing; but justification is not limited to that. It brings us into a larger place and a higher standing. Were it exhausted by the declaration of pardon, it might leave us still at a distance from God, and without further experience of His favour. But it carries with it also our *acceptance*. He deals with us as '*righteous in His sight*,' as standing now in His judicial presence free from sin, and thus worthy



of being taken into His full favour and fellowship. So Paul speaks of us as 'accepted in the Beloved' Eph. i. 6).

**Only for the righteousness of Christ :** God cannot justify at the expense of His own rectitude or the honour of His law. This clause states what reason He has for justifying, and on what ground He proceeds in so doing. He pardons and accepts sinful men, not for anything in themselves, nor on the ground of any measure of righteousness they are capable of working out, but on the ground of something done for them by their Head. This is called 'the righteousness of Christ'—a great Protestant term, denoting the merit of Christ's obedience. Christ was personally righteous, in the sense of being of sinless character. But He also finished a work appointed Him to do on our behalf by God. The obedience which He carried out even to death had merit in it, and it is this that makes the 'righteousness of Christ' which is here in view. It is also called 'the righteousness of God' (*e.g.* in Rom. i. 17), because it is a new righteousness provided by God for man, and accepted by God as sufficient. It embraces what is called Christ's *active* obedience, that is to say, His perfect fulfilment of all the precepts of the law ; and what is called His *passive* (*i.e.*, *suffering*) obedience, that is to say, His endurance of the penalty of the law. It is also spoken of as His *vicarious* obedience, that is, an obedience offered by Him in our place and as our representative.

**Imputed to us.** Our justification has a legal basis, viz., the merit of all that Christ has done and suffered for us. And this 'righteousness of Christ' makes a sure foundation—the only sure foundation, for it. Any righteousness of which we are capable would make a poor ground for our justification in the sight of the Divine Law ; for ours at the best is imperfect and uncertain. But Christ's observance of the law is perfect, and His endurance of its penalty is com-

plete. His righteousness, therefore, makes a foundation which cannot be moved. It also renders it consistent with God's own perfect rectitude that He should pardon and accept us. How is the benefit of it, therefore, made ours? The Answer closes by mentioning something on God's side and something on our side, which must meet in order to that. On His side, God *imputes* this perfect righteousness to us; that is, He puts it to our account, dealing with us as if what was done by our Representative had been done by ourselves. This imputation of Christ's righteousness is the counter-imputation to the other, of which we heard in Question 16, viz., the imputation of Adam's sin. It has its reason in the fact that we are not so many units, but members of a body, the Head of which is Christ; in other words, in the fact that there is a union both federal, or representative, and vital between Christ and us, in virtue of which He acts for us, and what is done by Him in that character can be credited to us whom He represents. This is the great truth which is so often urged by Paul, and expressed by him not only in passages where the word 'impute' itself is used (*e.g.*, Rom. iv. 6, 11); but in others, such as Gal. iii. 13; 2 Cor. v. 21, in which a different form is adopted.

**And received by faith alone.** This states finally the thing which is necessary on *our* side if the benefit of Christ's righteousness is to come to us. As God imputes, we must *believe*. He demands no other terms than *faith*, trust in Himself, His love, His promise, His Son. This faith has no merit in it, to win our justification. It is simply the *instrument* or *means* by which we take to ourselves that which God is pleased to offer. Hence it is spoken of as the *instrumental cause* of our justification, in distinction from the *meritorious cause*, which is Christ's righteousness or merit. The little word 'alone,' in the phrase, 'by faith alone,' is of great moment. It is a memorial of the controversy with Popery. It does not mean that

faith *continues* alone and produces nothing. For the Bible uniformly teaches that true faith works by love (Gal. v. 6), and prompts to obedience and all good works (James ii. 26). But it does mean that no works of ours, whether by themselves or in conjunction with anything else, can win God's justification for us. The Roman Catholic doctrine makes other things besides faith have some part in securing our pardon and acceptance with God. The Protestant doctrine teaches that the only thing required by God on our side, and the only thing capable of serving even as the instrument of our justification, is *faith*, or a simple submission of ourselves to Christ in reliance upon the sufficiency of what He has done for us.

#### QUESTION 34. *WHAT is adoption?*

*Answer.* Adoption is an act of God's free grace,<sup>a</sup> whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> 1 John iii. 1. Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!

<sup>b</sup> John i. 12. As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believed on his name.

Rom. viii. 17: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.

---

The word 'Adoption' occurs in Scripture, and has several distinct senses there. But oftenest it expresses the reception of believers now into the relationship of children of God. It is so used here. It denotes, therefore, something distinct from justification, and implying a still higher privilege. For to declare us *sons*, and to deal with us as such, means more than to pardon and accept us.

**Adoption is an act of God's free grace.** It is an *act*, because it implies a single, definite expression of



God's gracious will. The perfectly free or gratuitous nature of the act is again made prominent.

Whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God. The Bible applies the title *sons* or *children* of God to different orders of His rational creatures; to *angels*, as in Job i. 6; xxxviii. 7; to *magistrates*, as the delegates of God in ruling, in Ps. lxxxii. 6; but usually, in a high and peculiar sense, to *believers*. The answer gathers up the import of many passages in which the words *sons* and *children* of God are used in this third sense. A Roman who had no child of his own could adopt the child of another, and by a legal form endow him with his name, with the privileges of his home, and with the right of inheritance. So God is represented as taking those who by nature are not His sons into His family, and bestowing upon them the privileges which belong by right to true sons,—His love, His care, His protection, the provision which a father makes for his children's wants, the title which children have to inherit a father's property. The *evidence* of our Adoption is the new filial spirit, which shows itself in love to God, in obedience to His will, in confidence in our approaches to Him (see such passages as Rom. viii. 15; Gal. iv. 6, 7; 1 Pet. i. 14).

### QUESTION 35. *What is sanctification?*

*Answer.* Sanctification is the work of God's free grace,<sup>a</sup> whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God,<sup>b</sup> and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> 2 Thess. ii. 13. "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit."

<sup>b</sup> Eph. iv. 24. "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

<sup>c</sup> Rom. viii. 1. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."



Adoption presents us in a new relation to God. It is explained in the Catechism as the *legal* side of this relation. But God not only calls us sons and gives us the legal right ; He *makes* us sons, creating in us the true feelings of sons, and giving us the nature of sons. This He does by His Spirit, as we see from Gal. iv. 6. So we pass naturally from the subject of Adoption to that of Sanctification. This again is a Biblical term, found in such passages as 2 Thess. ii. 13 ; 1 Pet. i. 2. The verb 'sanctify' occurs in various senses ; but it implies the idea of *setting apart*. This Question states how we are *set apart* from folly and sin to holiness.

**Sanctification is the work of God's free grace.** This, too, is something which we owe not to any power of our own, but simply to God. And it takes place not because we merit it, but because God in His free favour imparts it. It differs, however, from the former ~~two~~ in that it is not an act, but a *work*—a process which goes on all through life.

**Whereby we are renewed in the whole man.** We are 'sanctified' or 'set apart' by being 'renewed,' made new again, made new creatures. The work is one, therefore, that goes far beyond *reformation* or amendment of life. It touches the nature within, not merely the life without. And as we are depraved in all the parts of our being, this renewal extends to 'the whole man,' leaving no part of our nature unaffected (see Paul's prayer in 1 Thess. v. 23).

**After the image of God.** The standard of our renewal is nothing less than what we see in God Himself. Being created in His image, we were at first morally like Himself. His grace is capable of restoring this moral likeness, and the aim which it sets before us is to be holy as He is holy (1 Pet. i. 15, 16). This is only consistent with our high privilege of Adoption. For if we are God's sons, we should be like our Father.

**And are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and**

live unto righteousness. This is the result of the renewal of our nature. It is stated in the strong and expressive language of the Bible itself, as found in Rom. vi. 2, 11, 1 Pet. ii. 24, and elsewhere. The phrase *dying unto sin*, or being *dead* to it, is used for becoming *insensible* to the power and charm of sin. 'To live unto righteousness' means to make righteousness the great aim and issue of our life. The 'more and more' indicates that this is truly a work, which demands constant effort, and has to be carried on from one stage to another. The gracious change in our nature, which is meant by being 'renewed in the whole man,' brings with it the ability to conquer evil more and more and to grow in pureness of life. There are thus two kinds of righteousness with which we are concerned. There is the righteousness of Christ, which lies outside of us. And there is the righteousness which this Answer speaks of—the moral goodness which is within ourselves. Neither of these becomes ours by our own unaided effort. So the first is called righteousness *imputed*, and the second righteousness *imparted*. And the former has the latter for its object. If God is pleased to put Christ's righteousness to our account, it is in order that this righteousness of life, this new moral quality which makes us like God Himself, may be exhibited by us. But we require a new ability in order to reach it, and it is the Spirit of God which *enables* us to do so. So Paul describes all the virtues of a godly life as the 'fruit of the Spirit' (Gal. v. 22).

It is of the utmost consequence to understand how *justification* and *sanctification* are related to each other. They are distinct things, and only error and a loss of Christian liberty can ensue from confounding them together. Yet they are not to be separated. There is no justification without sanctification, and there is no sanctification without justification. The latter leads to the former, and is the

ground on which it becomes possible. When we are released from the penalty of the law and reconciled to God, we receive also the gift of the Spirit, which frees us from legal fear, and enables us to live according to God's will.

There are three great terms, expressing three great matters of grace, which should be well understood. These are *regeneration*, *conversion*, *sanctification*. The first is defined as "the creative act of the Holy Spirit, implanting a new principle of life in the soul." It is this that makes it possible for us to repent and believe. To it our Lord refers in John iii. 3, 5, 6. The second expresses the first exercise of that new principle of life, the first turning of the new born sinner to God in repentance and faith. It is this that is in view in such Scriptures as Acts iii. 19. The third describes the whole process of carrying forward the new life, as it makes us more and more like God Himself.

QUESTION 36. *WHAT are the benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification?*

*Answer.* The benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification, are, assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost,<sup>a</sup> increase of grace,<sup>b</sup> and perseverance therein to the end.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Rom. v. 1. Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. V. 2. By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. V. 5. And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.

<sup>b</sup> Prov. iv. 18. The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

<sup>c</sup> 1 John v. 13. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life.



The three great benefits resulting from effectual calling have now been fully explained. But these are gifts so rich in grace that they bring other priceless benefits with them, which it is possible for us to enjoy in this life. This Question introduces us to the chief of these.

**The benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification.**—The expression ‘accompany or flow from’ is used, because in the things of grace it is not always possible for us to say which comes first, or at what particular point in God’s dealings with us, each benefit enters. Some of the blessings of His grace may come at once with our justification and adoption; others may come after these, and only at some particular point in our sanctification. They may come, too, at different times and in different measures to different persons.

**Are assurance of God’s love.** The word ‘assurance’ has two senses in Scripture. Sometimes it means a thing which makes one sure, a pledge or token; as in Acts xvii. 31, ‘whereof he hath given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead.’ At other times it means ‘firm persuasion’ of something, freedom from doubt about it. So John speaks of *assuring* our hearts before God (1 John iii. 19), and in the Epistle to the Hebrews we read of the ‘full assurance of hope’ (vi. 11), and the ‘full assurance of faith’ (x. 22). It appears to have the latter sense here, and when we speak of the *doctrine of assurance*, we mean the doctrine that we may have a gracious sense of being certainly the objects of God’s love, and sure of salvation. Some churches have asserted that no such clear persuasion of our being in a state of grace is possible. Others have been of the very opposite opinion, holding that there can be no true faith without this assurance. The churches which the Catechism represents take a middle position between these two extremes, affirm-



ing that assurance is possible, and is diligently to be sought; but that there may be true, saving faith without it. So it is declared to be not 'of the essence of faith.'

**Peace of Conscience.** 'Conscience' is the sense of right and wrong, or the voice within us which pronounces on the moral quality of all we do. Various things are said of it in the New Testament. We read, *e.g.*, of a *good* conscience (1 Tim. i. 5); a conscience *void of offence toward God and toward men* (Acts xxiv. 16); a *weak* conscience (1 Cor. viii. 7); a *pure* conscience (1 Tim. iii. 9); a conscience *seared with a hot iron* (1 Tim. iv. 2); a conscience *defiled* (Titus i. 15); an *evil* conscience (Heb. x. 22). The Bible nowhere uses the precise phrase *peace of conscience*. But it expresses the same thing in other words, and presents it as one of the chief blessings enjoyed by the believer. So it declares that 'to be spiritually minded is life and peace' (Rom. viii. 6). The gift of *peace* was one chief subject of our Lord's own discourses, as in John xiv. 27, xvi. 33.

**Joy in the Holy Ghost.** This benefit is given in the express language employed by Paul in describing the kingdom of God (Rom. xiv. 17). It means a joy which is created by the Holy Ghost and finds its object in His presence and work. This spiritual joy is not the least of the benefits bestowed on the justified, and it is largely dealt with in Scripture. It is the second of the graces which Paul names as 'the fruit of the Spirit' (Gal. v. 22). The reward of the faithful servant is this,—'Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord' (Matt. xxv. 21). Our Lord declared it to be His object to make us sharers in the joy which He Himself had (John xv. 11). The Old Testament saints understood well what it was to miss it, and what it was to have it: 'Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation' (Ps. li. 12); 'the joy of the Lord shall be your strength' (Neh. viii. 10). Among other memorable sayings of the New Testa-

ment on the subject, consider Paul's prayer—'Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost' (Rom. xv. 13); and Peter's word touching the unseen Saviour, 'Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory' (1 Pet. i. 8).

**Increase of Grace:** The word 'grace' means sometimes *objective* grace, that is, the gift of God which helps us; and sometimes *subjective* grace, that is, graciousness of character in ourselves. It appears to be the latter that is meant here. But we need grace in both senses. We have to 'grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ' (2 Pet. iii. 18); and in order to do so, we require ever more and more of the helpful grace of God. It is one of the high privileges of the justified that God does thus help them, so that they have the blessedness of seeing more and more of His ways and advancing in the life of holiness which yields gladness of heart.

**And perseverance therein to the end.** Effectual calling introduces us to a state of grace, and it is the last and best benefit of our justification, adoption and sanctification that we are enabled to abide in that state to the end. This clause touches the doctrine known as *the perseverance of the saints*; that is, the doctrine that those who truly believe shall not be suffered to fall wholly and finally away from grace, but shall be helped to continue in it until their earthly course is finished. It is affirmed by many, both Protestants and Roman Catholics, that a true believer may fall so utterly away from grace as to lose salvation. But those who keep by the Calvinistic doctrine, hold that the Bible warrants a more cheerful belief than that. They think this continuance in grace is involved in the election of believers, in their union with Christ, in the indwelling of the

Spirit in them, in the power of Christ's intercession. They consider it also to be plainly taught in such passages of Scripture as John x. 28, 29 ; Rom. xi. 29 ; Phil. i. 6 ; 1 Pet. i. 5.

Let it be carefully understood, however, that this doctrine does not mean that one who once becomes a believer in Christ is certain of salvation, whatever his subsequent life may be. The perseverance which is in view is a perseverance in *holiness* and *obedience*. If we are made sure of final salvation, it is only because God *keeps* us ; and He does this in a way consistent with our own free agency, by chastening us when we sin, turning us back when we err, and surrounding us with influences which preserve the flame of faith from being utterly extinguished in us.

QUESTION 37. *WHAT benefits do believers receive from Christ at death ?*

*Answer.* The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness<sup>a</sup> and do immediately pass into glory ;<sup>b</sup> and their bodies, being still united to Christ,<sup>c</sup> do rest in their graves<sup>d</sup> till the resurrection.<sup>e</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Heb. xii. 23. And to the spirits of just men made perfect.

<sup>b</sup> Phil. i. 23. Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ.

<sup>c</sup> 1 Thess. iv. 14. Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

<sup>d</sup> Isa. lvii. 2. He shall enter into peace : they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness.

<sup>e</sup> Job xix. 26. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.

The benefits which the grace of God brings to believers are so many and so great that they attend us at death itself, and in the other world. The following couple of Questions deal with the doctrine of the *Last Things*. This one takes up the first of these, viz., *death*. Physical death, as it now reigns in humanity, is set before us in Scripture as the penalty of sin.

It is spoken of in many different terms. But its best name is that of a sleep in Jesus (1 Thess. iv. 14). It is not to the Christian what it is to others ; for to him it ceases to be *penal*, and so loses its sting (1 Cor. xv. 55-57). One great benefit of grace, which is not expressly mentioned here, is that it changes the face of death itself. But if death, even to the believer, is still the separation for a time of the two great constituents, soul and body, which make the man, what is the fate of each during their separation ? That is the question which is considered here.

The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness. The Answer deals first with the fate of the more precious of the two things which make us men. It takes for granted the soul's immortality. That was reasoned out by some of the thinkers of the old world ; and there are arguments not due to Revelation which are taken to point to it. It is held to be implied, for example, in the soul's immateriality, in its imperfect development here, in its sense of the righteous award which must come to evil and to good, but which often fails to come fully on earth. But until Christ came it was only a fitful and uncertain grasp that the world had of the soul's immortality. His teaching, and above all His Resurrection, at last made it clear and certain. So Paul speaks of 'the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel' (2 Tim. i. 10). The Catechism, therefore, assuming that the soul lives for ever, states first of all that death puts a close at once and for ever to the whole period of its subjection to infirmity, temptation, and failure. By the soul being '*made perfect in holiness,*' however, we do not mean that it then reaches a point beyond which it cannot go. On the contrary, we have every reason to believe that there will be constant accessions of knowledge and constant progress in likeness to God. But it is



meant that at death the soul will be *confirmed* in holiness. On to that event there is a struggle between good and evil. But this shall cease then, and the soul shall be enabled to go on eternally in the way of holiness. We are not told how this great change is effected. But even on earth, as in the case of Paul's conversion, we see radical moral changes brought about in ways which seem to us as sudden as they are wonderful.

**And do immediately pass into glory.** This is directed against the idea that, between death and the resurrection, the soul is in a condition of sleep or unconsciousness, or that it passes into a place separate from heaven. It is directed especially against the Roman Catholic doctrine of *Purgatory*. That is the doctrine that the souls of all believers, except a few who are perfected here, are unfit to enter heaven as they leave earth, and must be purified by passing through a purgatorial fire, or painful process of discipline in the Intermediate State. Our doctrine, on the contrary, is that the merit of Christ and the work of the Spirit, which are available for us here, are all-sufficient, and need nothing added to them in the other world; that the trial of souls is finished on earth, and that they are immediately with Christ when they pass from this world. If indeed they are confirmed in holiness, what should come between them and the Divine presence, or what place but heaven should suit them? So our Lord Himself says, without mention of any intermediate state—'Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me' (John xvii. 24).

**And their bodies being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection.** The New Testament says little about the period between death and the resurrection, and it tells us nothing explicit about the fate of the body then. Only it gives us reason to believe that even the body is cared for

by its Saviour (Eph. v. 23). This it does, because it teaches that not even the shock of death can separate us from Christ (Rom. viii. 38). And if the body is still united with Him and under His keeping, we can reverently think of it as in safety and rest then.

**QUESTION 38.** *WHAT benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?*

*Answer.* At the resurrection, believers being raised up in glory,<sup>a</sup> shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment,<sup>b</sup> and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God<sup>c</sup> to all eternity.<sup>d</sup>

*a* 1 Cor. xv. 43. It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory.

*b* Matt. x. 32. Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

*c* 1 John iii. 2. When he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

*d* 1 Thess. iv. 17. And so shall we ever be with the Lord.

The doctrine of the Resurrection of the body, with which this Question deals, is one of the distinctive doctrines of Revelation. Other religions have taught the continued life of the soul, in however meagre and imperfect form. But the idea of the rising of the body was so strange to the world into which the Gospel was first sent, that, when Paul preached it at Athens, he was mocked (Acts xvii. 32). Even in the Old Testament it is but dimly indicated. But in the New Testament it is taught in the clearest and most authoritative way. Among many other passages notice the following—John v. 28, 29; Rom. viii. 11; Phil. iii. 20, 21; 1 Thess. iv. 13-17, and the sublime argument in 1 Cor. xv.

At the resurrection believers being raised up in glory. The New Testament teaches that all, just and unjust

alike, *shall be raised and judged* (see John v. 28, 29, as above, and Acts xxiv. 15). But the Catechism speaks only of the destiny of believers, and what is termed in Luke xiv. 14, 'the resurrection of the just.' It says nothing about the nature of the resurrection body; as to which the New Testament teaches that it is to be like Christ's risen body, identical with the present body, and yet different in many respects from it—a *spiritual* body suited to a new condition of life (see Phil. iii. 21, and 1 Cor. xv. 42-44). This Answer contents itself with the general statement that believers are 'raised in glory,' and proceeds to state what follows on the resurrection.

**Shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment.** Scripture teaches authoritatively what conscience itself suggests—that man being a moral and responsible being, there must be a *judgment* for him. We are in a certain sense under judgment on earth itself, our lives and lots and much that befalls us being, so far, judgments on our characters. But Scripture shows that there will also be an open and final judgment when all men shall receive in strictest justice according to their works. However it takes place, it will be to the righteous a thing of honour. What they have been on earth, has remained for the most part hidden from the eyes of other men and but imperfectly seen by themselves. But then it shall be made plain and open to themselves and others that God acknowledges them as His own, and acquits them of all guilt.

**And made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity.** Not only open acknowledgment and acquittal shall be theirs then, but *reward*. And the reward will be such as there can be none higher. It is to be the full possession of God Himself—the enjoyment of all that He is, who even to His people on earth is the 'exceeding joy' of their souls (Psalm xliii. 4); and that 'to all eternity,' without the risk of change or of interruption. This, at last, will

make them 'perfectly blessed.' Though they pass immediately into glory at death, their final perfection is not reached so long as body and soul are separate. But the Scripture doctrine of immortality is that of an immortality for the *whole man*. When body and soul are both glorified, and the believer with his whole humanity is raised to the vision and enjoyment of God, then is there *perfect* blessedness in the final sense of the word.



*In Crown 8vo. Third Edition. Price 5s.*

**LIGHT FROM THE CROSS:**

SERMONS ON THE PASSION OF OUR LORD.

BY A. THOLUCK, D.D.

---

*In Crown 8vo. Eighth Edition. Price 6s.*

**THE SUFFERING SAVIOUR:**

OR, MEDITATIONS ON THE LAST DAYS OF THE  
SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST.

BY F. W. KRUMMACHER, D.D.

---

**By the same Author.**

*In Crown 8vo. Second Edition. Price 6s.*

**DAVID, THE KING OF ISRAEL:**

A PORTRAIT DRAWN FROM BIBLE HISTORY  
AND THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

---

*In Crown 8vo. Fourth Edition. Price 6s.*

**THE SINLESSNESS OF JESUS:**

AN EVIDENCE FOR CHRISTIANITY.

By C. ULLMANN, D.D.

---

*In Crown 8vo. Price 6s.*

**MOSES:**

A BIBLICAL STUDY.

BY J. J. VAN OOSTERZEE, D.D.

---

T. & T. CLARK, 38 GEORGE STREET, EDINBURGH.

# Handbooks for Bible Classes and Private Students.

---

‘These volumes are models of the *multum in parvo* style. We have long desired to meet with a Series of this kind—Little Books on Great Subjects.’—*Literary World*.

---

**THE EPISTLE OF ST PAUL TO THE GALATIANS.** With Introduction and Notes.

By the Rev. Professor JAMES MACGREGOR, D.D.

Price 1s. 6d.

**THE POST-EXILIAN PROPHETS—HAGGAI, ZECHARIAH, MALACHI.** With Introduction and Notes.

By MARCUS DODS, D.D.

Price 2s.

**THE LIFE OF CHRIST.**

By Rev. JAMES STALKER, M.A.

Price 1s. 6d.

**THE CHRISTIAN SACRAMENTS.**

By Rev. Professor JAMES S. CANDLISH, D.D.

Price 1s. 6d.

**THE BOOKS OF CHRONICLES.**

By Rev. Professor MURPHY, Belfast.

Price 1s. 6d.

**THE WESTMINSTER CONFSSION OF FAITH.** With Introduction and Notes.

By Rev. JOHN MACPHERSON, M.A.

Price 2s.

**THE BOOK OF JUDGES.**

By Rev. Principal DOUGLAS, D.D.

Price 1s. 3d.

**THE BOOK OF JOSHUA.**

By Rev. Principal DOUGLAS, D.D.

Price 1s. 6d.

**THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.**

By Rev. Professor A. B. DAVIDSON.

Price 2s. 6d.

**SCOTTISH CHURCH HISTORY.**

By Rev. NORMAN L. WALKER, M.A.

Price 1s. 6d.

**THE CHURCH.**

By Rev. Professor WM. BINNIE, D.D.

Price 1s. 6d.

**THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.**

By Rev. Principal BROWN, D.D.

Price 2s.

*(Continued on next page.)*

---

T. & T. CLARK,  
38 GEORGE STREET, EDINBURGH.

# Handbooks for Bible Classes and Private Students.—*continued.*

---

- THE BOOK OF GENESIS.**  
By MARCUS DODS, D.D. Price 2s.
- THE REFORMATION.**  
By Rev. Professor LINDSAY, D.D. Price 2s.
- PRESBYTERIANISM.**  
By Rev. JOHN MACPHERSON, M.A. Price 1s. 6d.
- LESSONS ON THE LIFE OF CHRIST.**  
By Rev. WM. SCRYMGEOUR. Price 2s. 6d.
- THE SHORTER CATECHISM.**  
By ALEXANDER WHYTE, D.D. Price 2s. 6d.
- THE GOSPEL OF ST MARK.**  
By Rev. Professor LINDSAY, D.D. Price 2s. 6d.
- A SHORT HISTORY OF MISSIONS.**  
By GEORGE SMITH, LL.D. Price 2s. 6d.
- THE LIFE OF ST PAUL.**  
By Rev. JAMES STALKER, M.A. Price 1s. 6d.
- THE BOOK OF ACTS. (In Two Vols.)**  
By Rev. Professor LINDSAY, D.D. Price 1s. 6d. each.
- PALESTINE. With Maps.**  
By Rev. ARCH. HENDERSON, M.A. Maps by Capt. CONDER, R.E., of the Palestine Exploration Fund. Price 2s. 6d.
- THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.**  
By Rev. Professor J. S. CANDLISH, D.D. Price 1s. 6d.
- THE SUM OF SAVING KNOWLEDGE.**  
By Rev. JOHN MACPHERSON, D.D. Price 1s. 6d.
- HISTORY OF THE IRISH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.**  
By Rev. THOMAS HAMILTON, M.A. Price 2s.
- THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST LUKE.**  
By Rev. Prof. LINDSAY, D.D. Pt. I. 2s. Pt. II. 1s. 3d.

---

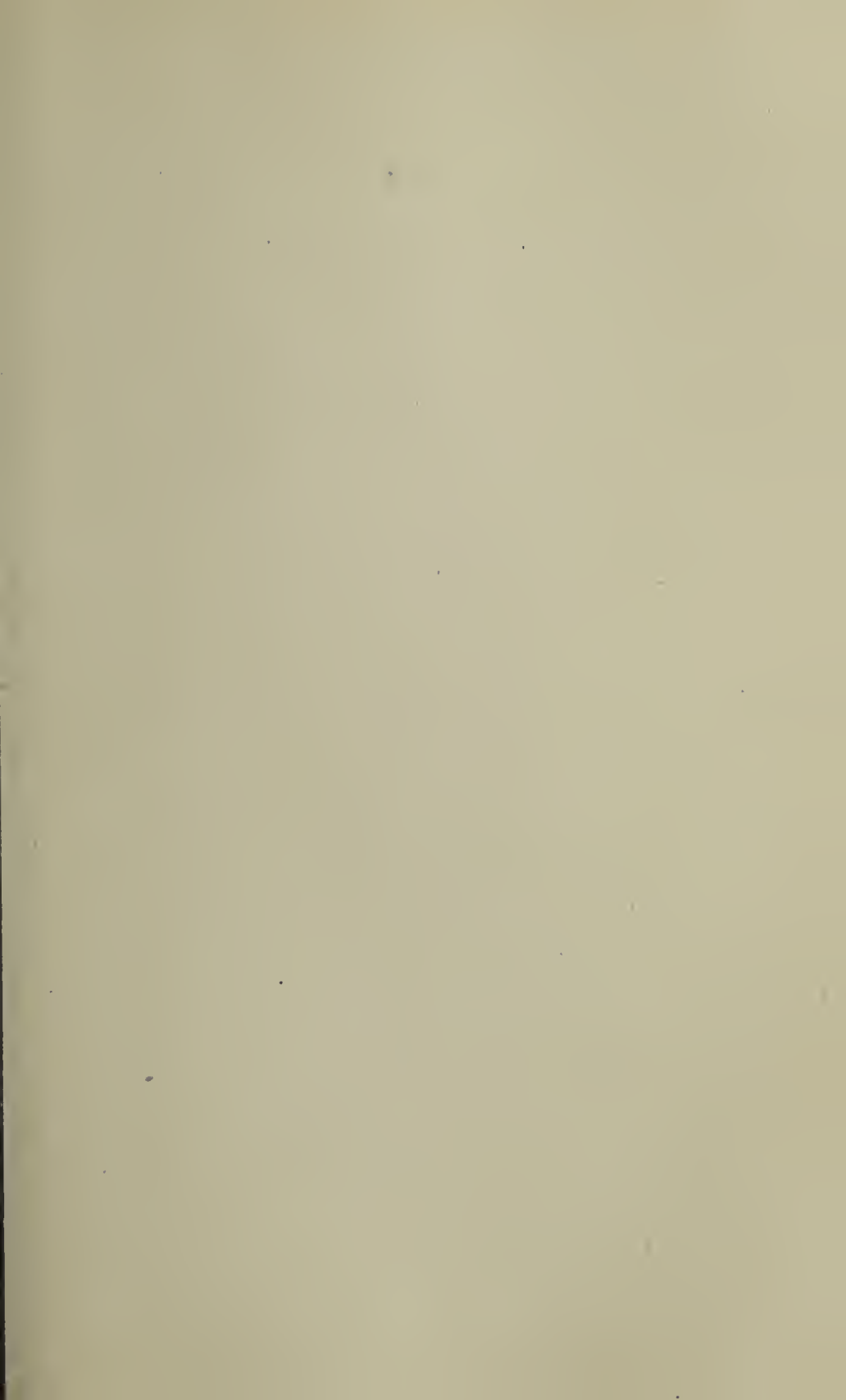
*Detailed Catalogues of T. & T. CLARK'S Publications  
free on application.*

---

T. & T. CLARK,  
38 GEORGE STREET, EDINBURGH.











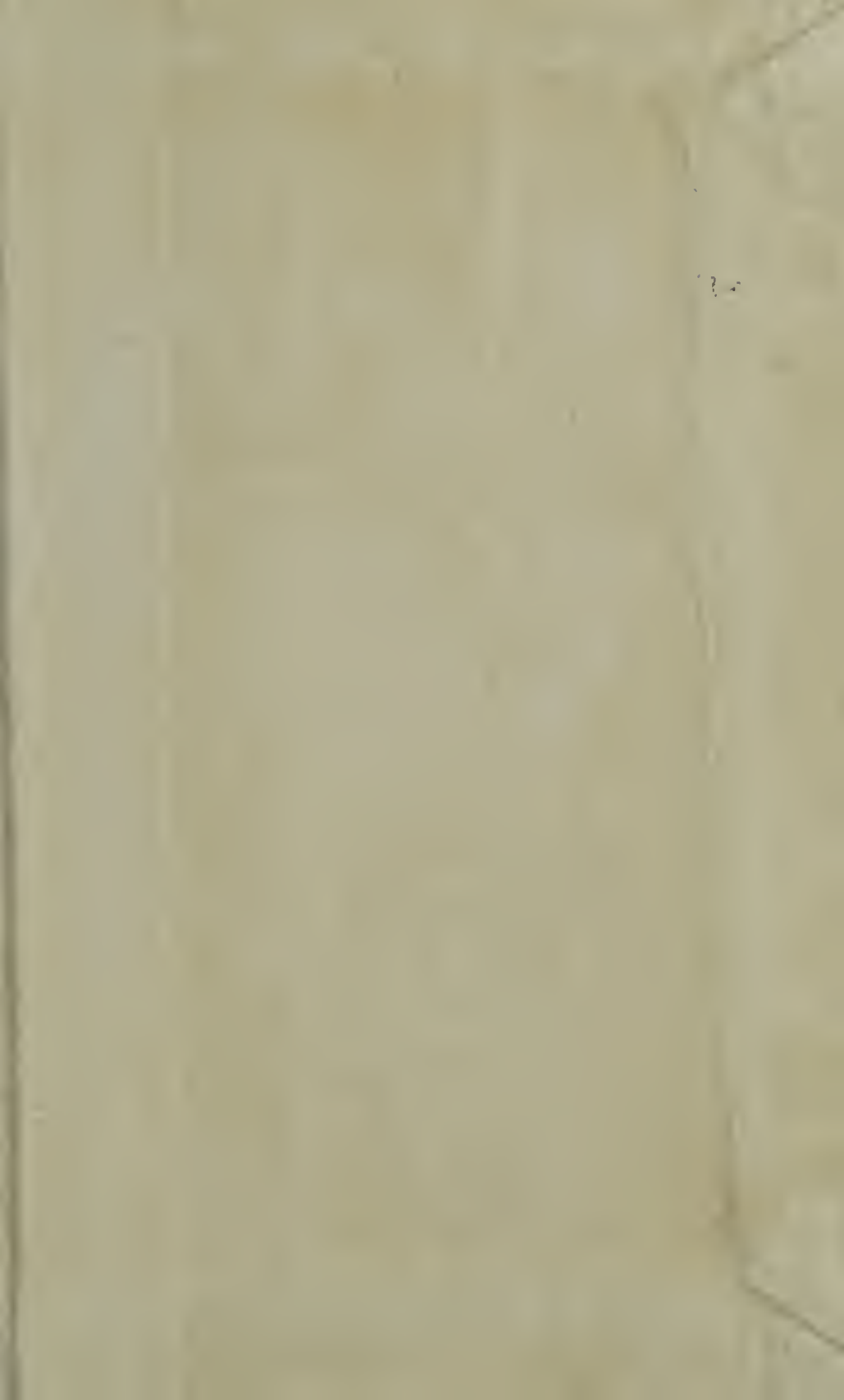






## Date Due

[illegible]



Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 01038 3968